

Horizon

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE & ART

SIR HUGH WALPOLE

Henry James : A Reminiscence,
with a drawing by Sir William Rothenstein

PIERRE JEAN JOUVE

The Present Greatness of Mozart

STEPHEN SPENDER

September Journal

GEORGE BARKER

RHYS DAVIES

G. F. GREEN

CECIL DAY LEWIS

LOUIS MACNEICE

Criticism by George Orwell,
Peter Quennell and K. J. Raine

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Edited by Cyril Connolly

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HORIZON

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

Vol. I. No. 2. February 1940

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COMMENT

The first issue of *Horizon* sold out in a week and is now a collector's rarity. Yet our friends tell us that nobody likes it, and we take this opportunity to deal with their criticism. 'The cover is old-fashioned and Georgian, as are many of the contents; a similar magazine in the last war was the first to print Eliot, Joyce etc. *Horizon* can only discover Bates and Priestley'. This type of criticism is the most prevalent, and is carried on in detail. To run through the first number, the editorial is escapist and cagey, the poetry out of date (except Auden which is obscure), Priestley is Priestley, Grigson is spiteful, Bates is Bates. There are too many political articles, and, while full of dull things, the magazine is also much too short. Another line of attack is to concede that the first number is interesting, but to add that it is middlebrow and 'smarty', and a third is to abandon the contents to their own merit and attack the policy or absence of policy. '*Horizon* is full of lovely things . . . but . . . should a magazine be just full of lovely things? Shouldn't it stand for something? Be animated by a serious purpose? Be getting somewhere'? *Reynolds* delivered a homily in which the editors of *Horizon* are identified with the emigré writers Huxley, Heard and Isherwood, who have gone to California to 'contemplate their navels'. Others accuse us of going back to the twenties, and seldom has a periodical exuded such an atmosphere of sameness and tameness, or so combined Regency smartness with Georgian mediocrity as the ill-fated *Horizon*.

Some of this criticism has been anticipated in the last editorial, but on the whole it is most valuable and bears directly on the chief literary problems of to-day. And the most penetrating comes from *Reynolds*, who are quite right to link up *Horizon* with a sneer at the English emigrés in California, for the departure of Auden and Isherwood to America a year ago is the most important literary event since the outbreak of the Spanish War. It is extremely

unfortunate that they began to settle in their new surroundings and send word home, just as we went to war with Germany, for it puts too easy a construction on their departure, and turns Isherwood's professions of faith in Yogi into a weapon that reactionary papers such as *Action* have used against him. But the fact remains that at the moment (and not because of the war) two of our best writers, who were also two of our most militant left-wing writers, have abandoned England and are taking out naturalisation papers in America—a country which artists up to a few years ago had fled in horror, and which only one English author, Richard le Gallienne, had made his home. Now Huxley, Heard, and Isherwood live in California, where Bertrand Russell is also lecturing, and Aldington and Auden inhabit New York (where MacNeice was to have joined him). For the first time since the eighteenth century the English Refugee, who made Rome, Florence, Venice, Capri, and Cap Ferrat famous, is going West.

Auden is our best poet, Isherwood our most promising novelist. They did not suffer from lack of recognition in England where they received a publicity which they did everything to encourage, nor have they gone to America to animate the masses, for Auden has been teaching in a New England school and Isherwood writing dialogue in a Hollywood studio. They are far-sighted and ambitious young men with a strong instinct of self-preservation, and an eye on the main chance, who have abandoned what they consider to be the sinking ship of European democracy, and by implication the aesthetic doctrine of social realism that has been prevailing there. Are they right? It would certainly seem so. Whatever happens in the war, America will be the gainer. It will gain enormously in wealth, and enormously (through the refugees) in culture. England will be poverty-stricken, even in victory, and will have either to be a poor reactionary state, a Victorian museum piece, like Hungary or Austria, or a poor progressive country, like Denmark or Scandinavia. The only alternative which would prove the

English refugees to have been wrong would be the union of England and France into a single state in which not only the military and financial resources are pooled, as at present, but the raw materials, the exports, the countryside, the culture and the climate, so that English workers would commute from sunny dormitories in the Cevennes, and the Anglo-Saxon spirit, humid with sentimental evasion and the South-West wind, be clarified by marriage to the Latin intellect.

The flight of Auden and Isherwood to a land richer in incident and opportunity is also a symptom of the failure of social realism as an aesthetic doctrine, and this brings us back to the policy of *Horizon*. We believe that a reaction away from social realism is as necessary and salutary as was, a generation ago, the reaction from the Ivory Tower. Georgian Poetry was a rustic movement, a kind of Jack Cade's rebellion against the aestheticism of the nineties; its roots in the country were not sufficiently deep, and it failed to flower. The Marxist attack on the Ivory Tower dwellers, on Proust, Joyce, Virginia Woolf etc. was far more vigorous, and set fire to a lot of rotten timber. But the fire grew out of hand, and, now that it is burning itself out, we can see that many green young saplings have been damaged, and the desolation is hardly compensated for by the poems of Swingler and Rickword, or the novels of Upward and Alec Brown.

This is the moment at which *Horizon* enters. Before we can go forward with a progressive policy a reconstruction is necessary. Firstly it must be restated that writing is an art, that it is an end in itself as well as a means to an end, and that good writing, like all art, is capable of producing a deep and satisfying emotion in the reader whether it is about Mozart, the fate of Austria, or the habits of bees. Since the Marxist attack ten years ago this fact has been lost sight of, and it is our duty gradually to re-educate the peppery palates of our detractors to an appreciation of delicate poetry and fine prose.

If literature is an art, then a literary magazine should

encourage the artists, whether they are Left or Right, known or unknown, old or young, and *Horizon* therefore makes no more apology for Priestley's admirable essay, or Sir Hugh Walpole's revealing glimpse of Henry James, than it does for Orwell's analysis of Boy's papers or Auden's Elegy on Freud which will appear in the next number. Names mean nothing. *Horizon* is not to be judged by its names but by the quality of its contents and we hope eventually that the presence of the most detested best-seller or the most obscure young poet on the cover of *Horizon* will be enough to indicate that they have written something remarkably good. As to discovering a Joyce or an Eliot in one number, all we can do is to bait the trap, to provide a medium where the future Rimbaud will find payment, good company and a sympathetic public. But it is possible that there are no Rimbauds, and that we must fall back on being the publishers of September Journal.

And the Cover. The Cover is intentional. It is not old-fashioned, but out of fashion, out of fashion because the editors believe that the fashionable cover, a functional applied-abstract design which incorporates photography and heavy sans-serif, is as out of date as a rubber topped chromium table in a neon lit caf  teria. A kindly critic said that Piper's cover was 'like the dowdy outside of an old-fashioned restaurant where you knew you would eat well—and in the case of *Horizon* where you know you would read well'. For good writing, bespoke, customs-built writing, is out of fashion also, and this is perhaps the most damaging criticism of the age we live in, and the reason why *Horizon* should be particularly grateful to the many readers, and the thousand subscribers who have come forward to support it. One day we will surprise them with a policy too.

GEORGE BARKER

AUSTRIAN REQUIEM

Who are the kings with diamonds in their eyes
 Mopping and mowing among our private shadows?
 Not to the syringa or the rose can we turn
 But meet their misery flowering its sorrows.
 Also evening is their grief, and morning is
 The term of their mourning time; spring and summer
 Elaborate the acanthus of their anger, and
 Formidable against the wall their tall bliss
 Kisses goodbye the kingdom that grows dimmer.
 The gold on their shoulders is the sun, and
 Union is their sceptre, snapt. The dove is here,
 Sorrowing in silence for its stolen olive,
 Circling in misery's haloes over
 -head. And at their eyes the diamonds of tears
 Makes beyond price the vengeance that is theirs.

I drum on the time their bloody assassination,
 Whom the autumnal mountains remember, when
 Mist hides the Austrian face in a lamentation
 Of geography over history. Time is with them,
 The murdered kings who lived in the Marx House,
 Time is with them more than Egyptian corpses
 To tell their story, Time is more with them.
 Today is funeral with hours of wreaths
 Honouring the eagle who could sing like water
 To the tune of violins and the rumour of waltzes,
 The gay bird, the gold bird, the bird of laughter.

Who now in the mountains with the music of Mozart
 Gazes with eyeballs needled, making not sweeter
 But falser the music that festoons the mountains.
 The sickbed of Freud is carried into the streets;
 The Danube is obstructed with the bodies of suicides

Locked in last love or big with the gas of fear,
Floating easily away to freedom on the tides,
Leaving the living here, on a doomed star.
Sadly in the Tyrolean valleys the bells
Of the goats echo sadly, Austria, Austria.

Now with the lamentation of an illustrious nation
Join the celebration of its ultimate liberation.—
The Austrian strong man pinioned among the pillars
Pulls down around him the column of subjugation.
The crocus breaks the rock, the eagle from its errors
Arises and inscribes liberty on the skies:
The Socialist kings step from their red tombs
Where history was not forgotten, armed with pain,
Staking the claim of blood over their homes
Where the dove, waiting, shakes out its wings and brings
Beautiful Union a branch and sceptre. Again,
O Austria, Austria, wandering in valleys—

Who are the kings with flowers for fingers
With whom you then idle in the summer fields,
Who wear their death like a transfiguration?
Not then the funeral, but a bluebell in the eye
Echoes a greater Austria: these are the nation
Whose April shower of lamentation yields
A summer of blood, but autumn return of glory:
Whose sex of Vienna, once gay with amorous thousands,
Gelded by Nazi March, now is their own mausoleum.
But not for long, O lachrymatory of Democracy!
Not here where Salzburg, like a bird of mythology,
Rose whistling from the fires of Kaisered Europe,
Not here the howitzer shall assume permanent dominion.—
But the sweet syringa shall burst from the corner
Where a brute buried it; the lyrical opinions
Of the dove murmur again, the summertime comer:
The avalanche disappear, and Love appear
Like Venus from clouds, and where a misery was
The ridiculous city of music shimmer there.

SIR HUGH WALPOLE

HENRY JAMES

A Reminiscence

I remember some years ago mentioning Henry James to a friend and hearing St. John Ervine's voice growling behind me: "Talking about that old bore again." Possibly at one time I did speak of James too often and, in any case, he would be altogether beyond Ervine's ken. But he—James, not Ervine—was so very much the greatest man I have ever known. That was my excuse: that I gave myself pleasure by thinking of him.

Nevertheless what wars can do to extend horizons! James died in the middle of the 1914-1918 War and now in the 1939-? War he seems a mythical figure, like one of the Blake presences in *The Book of Job*. It is in fact because of a legend that has grown up around him that I write these few words now. He wasn't, in reality, at all like the stuttering word-spinning priest of Nothingness that modern literary criticism pictures him.

The legend comes, I think, a good deal from Ford Madox Ford whose books of reminiscence were often fairy-tales—lively, entertaining, provocative and always romantic. It was, of course, perfectly true that James would stand at the windiest corner of the street and sustain one of his necromantic séances until a bad cold was inevitably caught by all. He was not aware that his long, slow, careful speech-windings were anything unusual or out of the way. I remember once, when staying with him at Rye, that, walking on a golf-course, we encountered two small children. James gave them some money with which to buy sweets but, when he had given it, began an oration to them as to what they should do with their money, the *kind* of sweets they should buy, the best time of the day for the consump-

tion of sweets and so on. They listened for a long time, staring up into his smooth Abbé-like face, then cast the coins on the ground and ran, screaming.

He was greatly distressed by this. What had frightened them? What had they seen or heard?

Here I must explain my own status in regard to those high vague figures, so dim now and tenebrous, before 1914.

I see at this distance James, Gosse, Colvin, Hewlitt, Arthur Benson as beneficent witches from *Macbeth*.

Beneficent they certainly were, but for the rest the parallel is very close. As they stood screaming over the literary cauldron, the wind blowing up over the heath 'very nasty indeed', each had, with several and individual pride, his own future Thane of Cawdor, and even, with a little necromancy, a possible King. It was a time when Literary reputations were of very much more importance than they are today. When James wrote his articles in *The Times* on "The Younger Novelists" there were battles of the most ferocious kind. Those named by him would have been triumphant indeed had they only been certain as to whether they were praised or blamed by him.

Gosse and Colvin were two rival witches, one thin, pink, precise and Puritan, the other piratical, feline, generous and wonderful company. Nature, who sees to everything, saw to it that Gosse should wear a black patch over one eye for several years before his death—just like John Silver!

Hewlitt was black, foreign-looking, sardonic, courageous, a grand man whose proper estimate has yet to be made.

They were all grand men and of a kindliness of heart that I do not find among many literary men today. But that is because literary men today are not expected to be anything but sensible—and as little in evidence as possible!

When I came to London in 1908 I was quite determined to get on and waste no time about it, but so soon as I met, through Robbie Ross, Wells and Max and Clutton Brock, I lost a great deal of my personal aggressiveness. I was so happy to be in the company of these great men that I truly did not think of myself at all. I went to Wells on Sunday

in Hampstead and to Gosse on Sunday in Regent's Park. I had worshipped Arthur Benson at Cambridge and had watched with awe the wonderful mental processes of Percy Lubbock, Gazelee and Howard Sturgis. Sturgis was a stout old-maidish person with a very sharp tongue who worked at embroidering in his fine house in the country. He wrote *Belchamber*. I was terrified of him.

All these persons were kind to me because of my vitality. They all hoped that in time I might mature and learn some taste, discretion, wisdom. What they most of them lacked was this same physical vitality. If only I might combine it with a few brains! they murmured. I well remember eagerly breaking into a conversation between Benson and Lubbock as to the *real* meaning of the end of *The Wings of the Dove*. I highly, eloquently explained it. I can still see Benson's stare as the most sophisticated of cows might incredibly survey a gambolling, presumptuous calf.

There I met Henry James. Immature though I was I perceived instantly his inevitable loneliness. He was lonely in the first place because, an American, he was never really at home in Europe. Nor was he at home in America for when he was there he longed for the age, the quiet, the sophistications of Europe.

He was lonely in the second place because he was a spectator of life. He was a spectator because his American ancestry planted a reticent Puritanism in his temperament and this was for ever at war with his intellectual curiosity.

Sexually also he had suffered some frustration. What that frustration was I never knew but I remember his telling me how he had once in his youth in a foreign town watched a whole night in pouring rain for the appearance of a figure at a window. "That was the end . . ." he said, and broke off.

His passion for his friends—Lucy Clifford, Edith Wharton, Jocelyn Persse, Mrs. Prothero, among others—was the intense longing of a lonely man. It was most unselfish and noble. His love for his own relations, his brother William, his nephew, had a real pathos for although

they beautifully returned it they could never be so deeply absorbed in him as he was in them. I went once to Brown's Hotel to say goodbye to him before his departure for America with William James who was very ill. While I was with him a message came and he hurried away. I waited and waited but no one came, so at last I started downstairs. I passed an open bedroom door and saw William lying on the floor and Henry standing over him. As I hurried down I caught an expression of misery and despair on Henry's face that I shall never forget.

It has become, in these fierce and bitter days, suspicious to speak of nobility of character but it must be risked when one speaks of Henry James. He had in relation with his friends so many things to put up with! First of all our intellects. Edith Wharton alone seemed to satisfy him intellectually and that I always thought odd for, with the exception of *Ethan Frome* I always considered her, and consider her still, a flashy, superficial novelist. But James was never a good critic of contemporary writers. "Poor, poor Conrad!" he would say. And he wrote of D. H. Lawrence "trailing in the dusty rear" in those famous *Times* articles. He could see little in the novels of E. M. Forster. Wells and Bennett were to him intolerably diffuse.

He did, quite naturally, wonder why novelists in general paid so little attention to form, did not consider more seriously their 'subjects', and so on. All this is, of course, generally known. What is *not* so generally known is that the failure of his own *Collected Edition* struck him a blow from which he never properly recovered.

The night when the gallery booed him at the first performance of *Guy Domville* and the days when he realized that the *Collected Edition* over which he had worked for years, re-writing the earlier novels, composing the marvellous Prefaces, was not only not selling but was also not reviewed—these were catastrophes for him. He was as little vain and conceited as any man, but his art was something that had a value and importance altogether outside himself and his own popularity.

Just as Wells hoped that, if he kept on long enough, human beings would learn some wisdom before it was too late, so James hoped, that if *he* kept on long enough, writers would learn something of the sacrifice and service and discipline that Art demanded. But of course no one learned anything: it has needed something very much more terrible than Wells' Encyclopædia and James' cadences to bring about a realization. . . .

So James fell back on his friends. I soon began to wonder at the contrast between the simplicity of his heart and the complexity of his brain. I knew him only after he had shaved his beard and Sargent's portrait in the National Portrait Gallery presents him exactly as he was except when in the company of his close friends. At parties and places where people gathered together he was as ceremonial as an Oriental and many people found it very tiresome to stand at attention and wait for the long unrolling of the sentences and think of something to say in reply that was not completely idiotic. But alone with the people he loved, his humour was over all and his tenderness beneficent.

He could not do too much for his friends, could not be too close to them, could not hear too many details of their daily lives. It mattered nothing to him if their tastes were not his if he loved them. Jocelyn Persse, for example, liked horses rather than the Arts and pretended none other, but Henry was never happier than when he was in Jocelyn's company.

My enthusiasms often exasperated him and once he was really angry, with a ferocity, over some would-be critical article of mine but he accepted me for better or worse and protected me often enough against the ill humours and scorns of others.

I look back to one especial case of protection that for me illuminates the whole distant scene with a nostalgic light. Some ten years ago I described it in a small privately-printed book and now, writing in a second war, the figures are yet more distantly removed, more ghostly but, for myself, more real.

It began with Henry James' Seventieth Birthday. His friends agreed to give him a replica of the Golden Bowl and his portrait painted by Sargent. A letter must be sent out asking for subscriptions. Edmund Gosse, as James' oldest literary friend, I as his youngest, were deputed to write and despatch this letter.

So soon as I heard of this I implored to be spared. I loved Gosse and was terrified of him. I was sure, in my heart, that I would make a mistake and then that cold, bitter anger would slay me—and I passionately did not want to be slain!

Henry James calmed my fears. He assured me that all would be well. He himself would see to it. So, after a beautiful letter had been composed by Gosse and a list of grand and memorable names compiled, I went down to the printers in the City to arrange for the printing and despatch. Henry James accompanied me "so that nothing might be wrong".

Two days later I dined alone with Maurice Hewlitt. For one reason or another he did not at that time care for Gosse. He met me in the hall. His sardonic eye flashing, his little "goatee" pirouetting with pleasure on his elegant chin, he said, as he took my hand: "Dear Hugh, I knew that you were fond of me. But I did *not* know until this morning that Gosse was. In fact I thought the contrary. I have, however, received so affectionate a letter from Gosse and yourself that I am flattered and proud." My heart sank. Something dreadful had occurred. "For God's sake tell me," I murmured.

With delight he showed me the letter. James and I had forgotten altogether to fill in the names of those to whom the letter was sent. The letter, therefore began: "Dear" and ended: "We are, Dear, yours sincerely, Edmund Gosse, Hugh Walpole." And this to people as dignified, as unassailably great as John Morley and Mrs. Humphrey Ward!

Oh yes, Gosse was angry! I have his letter still.

But the real point of it is that Henry James took the

blame entirely upon himself and chose the reception day for the subscribers at Sargent's studio to explain the facts.

He stood beside the Portrait and, as each person approached, explained that it had been *his* fault and neither Gosse's nor mine that the names had been omitted. And his explanations took a very long time. And the queue grew ever longer and longer. And I stood for hours blushing and confused. It was an amazing scene but a beautiful one.

Time we are told is no longer Time. And so, at this moment, as I write, Henry, in his brown buff waistcoat, his dark elegant clothes, is standing beside his Portrait, courteous, anxious, explanatory, helping a young friend, apologizing for a breach in good manners that he had not himself committed.

[Henry James, 1898: Lithograph
drawing by Sir William Rothenstein.]



W. R.

CECIL DAY LEWIS

THE FOURTH GEORGIC

(lines 1 to 66)

Next I come to the manna, the heavenly gift of honey.
Look kindly on this part, too, my friend. I'll tell of a tiny
Republic that makes a show well worth your admiration—
Great-hearted leaders, a whole nation whose work is
planned,

Whose morals, groups, defences are all in apple-pie order.
A featherweight theme: but one that can load me with
fame, if only

No wicked fairy cross me and the Song-God come to my call.

For a start you must find your bees a suitable home, a
position

Sheltered from wind (for wind will stop them carrying home
Their forage), a close where sheep nor goats come butting in
To jump on the flowers, nor blundering heifer stray to flick
The dew from the meadow and stamp its springing grasses
down.

Discourage the lizard too with his lapis lazuli back
From their rich folds, the bee-eater and other birds,
And the swallow whose breast was blooded once by the
killer's hand.

For these make wholesale havoc, snap up your bees on the
wing

And bear them off as a titbit for their ungente nestlings.
But mind there's a bubbling spring nearby, a pool moss-
bordered,

And a rill ghosting through the grass:

See too that a palm or tall oleaster shadow the entrance,
For thus, when the new kings lead out the earliest swarms—
The spring all theirs—and the young bees play, from hive
unprisoned,

The bank may be handy to welcome them in out of the heat
And the tree meet them halfway and make them at home in
its foliage.

Whether the water flows or is stagnant, fling in the middle
Willow boughs criss-cross and big stones,
That the bees may have plenty of bridges to stand on and
dry their wings

At the summer sun, in case a shower has caught them
loitering

Or a gust of east wind ducked them suddenly in the water.
Green spurge-laurel should grow round about, wild thyme
that perfumes

The air, masses of savory rich-breathing, and violet beds
Sucking the channelled stream.

Now for the hive itself. Remember, whether you make it
By stitching concave bark or weaving tough withies together,
To give it a narrow doorway: for winter grips and freezes
The honey, and summer's melting heat runs it off to waste—
Either extreme is feared by the bees. It is not for fun
That they're so keen on caulking with wax the draughty
chinks

In their roof, and stuff the rim of their hive with flowery
pollen,

Storing up for this very job a glue they have gathered
Stickier than birdlime or pitch from Anatolia.

Often too, if reports are true, they dig deep shelters
Underground and keep house there, or out of the way are
found

In a sandstone hollow or the heart of a rotten tree.

None the less you should smear with smooth mud their
chinky chambers

Solicitously for warmth, and lay a thin dressing of leaves.
Don't have a yew too close to their house, or burn in a
brazier

Reddening crabshells: never risk them near a bog,
Or where there's a stink of mud, or a rock formation echoes
Hollow when struck and returns your voice like a ghostly
reflection.

For the rest, when the golden sun has driven winter to
ground

And opened up all the leagues of the sky in summer light,
Over the glades and woodlands at once they love to wander
And suck the shining flowers and delicate sip the streams.
Sweet then is their strange delight

As they cherish their children, their nestlings: then with
craftsmanship they

Hammer out the fresh wax and mould the tacky honey.

Then, as you watch the swarm bursting from hive and
heavenward

Soaring and floating there on the limpid air of summer—
A vague and wind-warped column of cloud to your wonder-
ing eyes:—

Notice them, how they always make for fresh water and leafy
Shelter. Here you shall sprinkle fragrances to their taste—
Crushed balm, honeywort humble,

Make a tinkling noise round about and clash the Mother-
God's cymbals.

They will settle down of their own accord in the place you
have perfumed,

And crawl to the innermost room for rest, as their custom is.

PIERRE JEAN JOUVE

THE PRESENT GREATNESS OF MOZART

It takes time for genius to become what it really is. Talent alone does not seem to have to undergo the same time-process before it can become apparent. Genius is at first like a tree that is too vast for human sight, and not only is it possible for it to remain for a long while unseen in its entirety, but also it may be seen in a distorting light and, on account of the way the proportions of genius alter with time, will make its appearance only gradually, by means of a slow discarding of the qualities falsely attributed to it in the beginning. It can even change in varying aspects within itself in order to correspond to new developments in human society; and it can and should be illumined by the whole of human experience posterior to its historical appearance: thus it becomes no longer the work of (say) Mozart, but the work of the universe. By that time, we can no longer interpret the work of genius according to the explicit intentions of its creator or his opinions about it: for we must realize that he whose spirit is truly profound is never entirely conscious of his own creation; rather does his work impose itself upon him and surpass him from the very start.

It has taken Shakespeare three centuries to reach something like his true stature. Mediæval French sculpture is now seen to constitute the summit of Occidental religious art. But Palestrina has scarcely been perceived as yet. Real and artificial clouds still surround the greatness of El Greco and of Poussin. Among all the varieties of genius, the Genius of Music is that which has greatest power of motion, which has the most marvellous possibilities of transformation, is richest in purifying virtues, and propounds

with greatest *difficulty* the riddle of evolution through interpretation.

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One hundred and fifty years have passed since Mozart first set out in pursuit of his fulfilment, in order to stand at last revealed as it was God's will that he should be: as an absolute Source of music. He has had to pass through extraordinary disguises before reaching this apotheosis. The name of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart has ever been a glorious one. But it is as though the first glory to be associated with him, the glory of the *prodigy*, had marked him with its inferior quality and relegated him to an epoch of brilliant worldliness, so that Mozart has been unable to escape from the misfortune of *success*. Behind the whole life, work and death of Mozart there is a significance the very opposite of that which has been attributed to them by that favourable tide which has swelled round him since the earliest days of his career; nevertheless, this tide has carried him away with it. He was not lacking in admirers during the nineteenth century: Goethe declared that Mozart's music surpassed all, Stendhal swore by "Don Juan" alone; the "divine Mozart", in fact, was everywhere supreme; a "mozartian air" spelt invincible enchantment. It is legitimate to suppose that the adulations of such different types of mind were in accord only through misunderstanding. One has this suspicion, for example, when one compares Delacroix' opinion, in his Journal, of Mozart, with his opinion of the last works of Beethoven. What Delacroix liked about Mozart was not at all what he *ought* to have liked, being Delacroix, and being so powerfully attracted by Faust and Hamlet. No,—at that time, the true Mozart *was not yet visible*. Instead, there was universally recognized a figure based on all the mozartian virtues: lightness, grace, tenderness, vivacity and proportion,—a figure that became entirely substituted for the true Mozart. The kind of interpretation which gives chief importance to lightness, tenderness and grace, progressively strengthened this image of a delightful and seductive

figure, and strengthened it, moreover, with values borrowed from the scale of truth, but ultimately untrue because of the accent placed upon them.

This labour of deception caused Mozart to withdraw into the realm of shadows. When the Wagnerian invasion set out to conquer Music, he almost disappeared. At the time of our youth (this was in France), Mozart, it seems to me now, was as remote as Rameau and as eighteenth-century as Gluck. He was a quite small figure. A charming little marquis in a perruque and silken knee-breeches, tuning the violin upon his knee. Mozart became the synonym of all that is childlike and innocent in music, deliberately unconscious of all the wretchedness of life and completely unrelated to it; he became an image as applied and as successfully executed as a sentimental Watteau,—the pretty Mozart.

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“Not a day passes but that I think of death,” wrote Mozart at the most successful moment of his youth. “Only from time to time, I suffer from as it were fits of melancholy,” says another letter, written to his father in 1778. And then there is that extraordinary letter belonging to the final period, concerning the *Requiem*: “I am about to breathe my last. I have reached the end before having fully enjoyed my talent. Yet life has been so beautiful and my career was opening under such fortunate auspices! . . . But one cannot change one’s destiny. No man can number his days; one must be resigned: the will of Providence will be accomplished. I am making an end: this is my funeral chant and I must not leave it unperfected.”

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It is profoundly certain that Mozart’s genius is situated beneath the sign of death; but this contention at once demands to be explained. Death presides over the origin of a marvellously perfect form, of a “limit” exquisitely touched and always fulfilled exactly—right to the end. But this is still too general. The pure operation of the spirits of life and death in Mozart consists in a domination

(perhaps unique) of the spirit of reason, illumined by Faith, and conforming to the golden rule of beauty, over the most violent forces of concupiscence, grief, melancholy, mockery and fury—demoniac and obsessional,—over the cruellest realities that exist in fact,—over sin itself. The part played by death in the work of Mozart is entirely spiritual; in it, death is the sister of fire. The enigma is centred around beauty: that this beauty should be so constant, and that it should always reveal, beneath, the inner suffering.

In a certain sense, there is something inhuman (or super-human) in Mozart's work. Probably it is that there is something miraculous for us in what he has to say. Mozart does indeed perform a miracle; and it is hardly surprising that it is difficult for most men to hear it. As Bruno Walter has so well said, the false Mozart was invented by those superficial people who, deaf to the things of the spirit, turned Mozart's virtues against Mozart himself; who made of the power of light a glittering adornment, and rendered invisible the secret grief. Mozart has been laid open to censure by his own admirers; for too long has admiration stood between his work and its true understanding. The lucidity and painful conflict of our own epoch was necessary before Mozart could reappear,—in the guise, this time, of an archangel.

Mozart cannot be explained by his own utterances. What he himself said about his work has very little importance. This strange and fantastically proportioned genius keeps his work in dependance on that quality of the bizarre which distinguishes his own person; he is anti-goethian in the sense that he knows nothing whatever about himself and *has* to continue in this blessed ignorance. He is conscious simply of having to be entirely song, entirely music; of being able (as one of his letters from Italy proudly announces) to compose in every style. It was surely a paradox of genius that caused Mozart to go to Italy in order to learn there to be *only* Mozart, to create a style inimitable from the first note on, and to produce, with the aid of superficial Italy, what Italy by herself could never have

produced: the Mozart-world.

Yet "in every style" does truly represent the scope of his work, from *Idomeneo* to the *Requiem*. Forty-one symphonies (three of which are outstandingly great), all the works of chamber-music and the concertos, twenty-four ballet-operas and six operas, sixteen masses and a quantity of pieces of religious music for choir—920 works in all; and Mozart died at the age of thirty-five. He certainly is a prodigy—in this case on the plane of creation. But I am trying to distinguish another characteristic of his greatness. There are certain mysteries of sound which are too lofty, too complex and too sacred to be caught by words. But we can say, nevertheless, that when we now hear, conducted by Bruno Walter, the principal symphonies (for instance, the *D major*, the *E flat* and the *Jupiter*) and *Don Giovanni*, when we receive the grace of the "Qui tollis" from the *Great Mass in C minor*, or of the "Kyrie" from the *Requiem*, when our heart is searched by the *Ave verum corpus*, if we look for a standard by which to measure the force of our emotions, if we wish to find a symbol of "equivalent greatness" in Poetry, we can think only of Shakespeare—and even then Mozart's religious side has to be left singularly unaccounted for. (Of course such comparisons are basically false: what aspect of Shakespeare is in question? none of his aspects, but rather a certain spirit of visionary solemnity, a tone "of sovereign loftiness" and a tragic extremism resolved by beauty; in short, the essential shakespearean quality itself).

Of Mozart's polyphony it might be said that it had the substance of *steel*. Something extremely hard, yet as pliable as though it were perfectly soft. (Thus *Don Juan*, at the end of the first act, bends his dagger against his breast, while singing against the choir of lamentation, fury and remorse). The violins play the leading role in this steel structure, which is formed by the opposition, the marriage, the marriage-conflict, between the woodwind and the strings. But whether they are sad, or cruel, or smiling, these are

the explosions of a *hard* substance; the point cannot be too much stressed. In an extremely complex texture, difficult to grasp in its entirety, apparently simple in a cleverly deceptive way on account of its always being held together by the simple continuity of beauty, occur movements of dazzling strength, incessantly,—while at the same time a series of marvellous developments, pursued to their furthest limits, separate them. *Rupture* is the law of this supreme harmonic art. What caused the appearance of a music so essentially Music? The struggle of the soul against the soul, and of affect against affect, the torn division, the wound,—conflicting unity becoming divine unity. This unity is brought about only by renewing the incessant rupture. Mozart had to escape from his life in order to find his life. He performed this feat without an ounce of heaviness, with “diabolical” lightness, and with all the central flame he could command. It should not be supposed that the mozartian idea was always that of catharsis, or of ascent towards the light as in *The Magic Flute*. No, there is far more variety, human truth, despair and *error* in Mozart’s divine outpourings. Strong analogy with the pitiless onward movement of Shakespeare. In the Symphony in E flat, the dissonance-filled Menuetto (according to the modern interpretation) is like the tense advance of an angry demon. *Don Giovanni*, which is so entirely Demonic a work, abounds with the strangest instances. Don Juan’s great aria about wine, women and the dance, expresses black destruction by means of a radiant gaiety. In a vigorous and solemn recitative, set against the graceful festive minuet, Leporello invites the Masks to enter and at the same time invites Death. As musician and as dramatist, Mozart had complete mastery both of variety and of truth. “Balance . . . truth . . .” (Letter of 1782). There was nothing which could not be grasped by his mind so long as it adopted the *form* of his mind. His work is baroque, and also Greek; both classical and modern; the least that can be said of it is that it represents something never to be found in the works of others. In the rapid unfolding of this savage and

exquisite music, the greatest amount of force in every register of the orchestra and of the voice is brought into play, in order to reunite several varieties of genius: genius of invention, genius of proportion and genius of childhood.

What is so astounding in *Don Giovanni* is precisely the variety of styles, the layers of style one within another. Opera "buffa-seria", "dramma giocoso",—it becomes impossible after a while to detect the exact nature of the *tone* employed. This seems to me to indicate the presence of the Demoniac in Mozart.

With an extraordinarily amplified vitality, the genius condenses all contraries into one thing, life itself (in reality, sin). His passion for rupture becomes an experience of the whirlpools and battles of sin, and of the life of the unconscious; which reaches sublimity through strength and tenderness, the gems of desire and the ash of pleasure. The *shining dream* reaches its spiritual climax in one implacable moment—the chastisement at the hands of the Stone Guest. The incorrigible guilty power, which is of the Devil, has no longer on this earth any hold except over beauty, everlastingly over beauty, warm and throbbing, familiar with the ways of grief. When Leporello conceals himself beneath the festive table, while the great sinner is making his interminable refusal to repent, while the choir is intoning the words:

*Tutto a tue colpe è poco
vieni! c'è un mal peggior!*

then something secret is torn apart within us, and dies; and in music and in drama we undergo an experience of death.

Let us consider on the other hand the religious works. It has not been written with sufficient emphasis that of all mystical composers, Mozart is the closest to us, and that by means of the art of sounds he has manifestly easy access to the mystical life; and that the essentially Christian mystical being in Mozart is not absolutely confined to religious expression according to the Catholic faith. Mozart

belongs to a time when all the modes of modern thought, the reign of Catholicism still being absolute, were able to find a place within Catholicism, and when the liberty of the religious concept was only just beginning to grow. Mozart's religious temperament was of too deep a nature to be able to find full expression in the facile Catholic habits of his life. But for him as for all mystics, Christ is *real*, complete, unattainable and ineffable. When Mozart writes on the theme of Christ (the solo *Et incarnatus est* in the Great Mass, the motet *Ave verum corpus*), his song is of Christ, and of our humanity no longer: Mozart disappears. It is not that he is carried to his own summit like Bach, the summit of Moses on Sinai. He simply vanishes into ecstasy. What is still more surprising is that this disappearance takes place, I feel, within the very *spirit* of Mozart, at the moment when his musical genius is at the height of its power. If we could study this situation very deeply, with the aid of instruments of psychic analysis such as we lack at present, we should perhaps find an explanation of the possible relationship between mysticism—negation of art—and that form of art which is most highly developed from the artistic point of view.

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One cannot neglect to consider the phenomenal scope of Mozart's work, and within this work, the scope of the religious side of it. When in 1791 Mozart wrote in a letter to the Municipality of Vienna soliciting a chapel-master's post: "My wide knowledge of the religious style encourages me to believe myself more capable than others might be," he was stating the truth, and it is to be remarked that he thus credits existence to a religious style of which he is the inheritor and continuer. But this question leads one to consider a situation much more general in ancient art, particularly in music, a doctrinal situation uniting creation to tradition by means of singularly efficacious ties. There is no doubt that in its monumental, rigidly contrapuntal passages, Mozart's style is indebted to certain predecessors, Italian and German chapel-masters, and no doubt to Handel

(particularly in the *Kyrie* of the Requiem, which is at the same time one of the peaks of the "monumental" side of Mozart's work). But at the age of seventeen, Mozart wrote at Milan a *Motette "Exsultate"*, the inventiveness, aerial mysteriousness and jubilant spirit of which are entirely personal to him; and it was really then that Mozart's religious style was created, a style uniting—as it is particularly interesting to note—both archaic and severe, and tender and human elements, and accomplishing this by completely "burning" that grace which is profane, in the sacred fire (the contrary of the process adopted by Italians of all periods). This style touches us very closely: it should be remembered that it is the last great religious style in Europe.

But the scope of Mozart's more untrammelled thought is also almost inconceivable, ranging as it does from concertos to masses, from symphonies to motets, from tender to tragic operas, from quartets to serenades. The composition of the motet *Ave verum* belongs to the time when Mozart was working on the *Zauberflöte*. His religious and almost irreligious genius (does not *The Magic Flute* betray the subterranean influence of the French Revolution with its cult of Reason?) escapes from all ideal categories and, like that of Shakespeare, is at one and the same time atheistic, believing, spiritual and magical. We have no longer a scale by which to measure the size of such men. Our beings have become too small and the social troubles that weigh down on us too great.

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I see in Mozart the most modern of the old musicians. Because of his suffering and his hardness and of his tendency towards the superhuman, he represents all that is craved for by the best in us, by that part of ourselves which has been least worn away. He represents it more clearly than any other master of Music, except Bach. An opera like *Fidelio* (the most beethovenian of Beethoven's works) uplifts us with its irrepressible and burning force, with its breath of that quality for which the German name is "Die

Treue". When destiny is unrolled (in the *Leonora Overture* No. 3, elucidated to perfection by Toscanini) in all its infinite dimension, such destiny as man is as yet capable of *bearing*,—it is really with man's past that we are confronted, and a shower of inward tears accompanies our nostalgia. Yet Mozart, having passed through this world previously, still finds himself beyond; he keeps the faith no longer, but helps us intermittently to evade our responsibility. Beethoven revives in us our deep feeling of responsibility in order that faith may triumph over sin. Mozart tears us away from it, wishing us to be *elsewhere*. The "little fellow" of the letters to Constance Mozart has the power to do this; he has it to a divine degree. And to break with this world, by making beauty intervene in it, is undoubtedly the task with which we moderns are faced today.

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Mozart's aversion to Salzburg, his birth-place, was very strong and persistent. "You know . . . how odious Salzburg is to me! . . . Everywhere else I have much greater hope of being able to live satisfied and happy . . . —You now have the opinion of a true *patriot*! Do everything you can (at Salzburg) to help music soon to find a backside: that's what is most needed. At present it has certainly got a head . . . But that's just the trouble! As long as there's no change in this state of affairs, I shall stay away from Salzburg. Afterwards, I shall come and go as long as there's V.S." (*Voliti subito*, P.T.O.) (Letter from Paris in 1778).

As one walked through beautiful Salzburg, Salzburg of the Medicis but also of the green mountains of idyll, Italian town metamorphosised, grave and homely and aerial; but with also its nightmare aspect, the salt-mines, the catacombs in the enormous rocky walls; a town that might have been found in the work of Piranese; as one walked through Salzburg, one could not help being struck by the identity which existed somehow between the genius of the town and the genius of Mozart. What does this mean? Mozart hated what he must certainly have loved and which united him

by blood with the earth. I scrutinize the powerful and moulded but violently anxious face in Lange's portrait. Its feminine character makes one feel astonished and a little uneasy. The drama between oneself and one's country, another form of the drama between oneself and the mother, oneself and birth, suddenly appears to me as though inscribed within the heavy matter of those eyes. And yet the face as a whole is like an illuminating globe—*like a sun*. Does that not seem to suggest that the painful and bitter cleavage from the maternal force, which he later re-absorbed, as it were, was redeemed by his marrying the sun? Redemption of the mother by the father, election by Jupiter, the initiation in *The Magic Flute*: such would appear to be Mozart's destiny. The puerile aspect of his sentimental life, the irresponsible aspect of his actions, also the sombre aspect of the time when the angel was gradually dying in him, the precocity and the haste of genius, the very brevity of his existence, are to be explained only by referring to the highest form of tragedy. *Don Giovanni*, situated at the crossroads, takes on proportions of truly grandiose significance. Mozart was sent to the earth in order not to love, not to accept, not to endure—and yet to love, to be overflowing with love, by these very means. Mozart died a child. Nothing of the wonder of the child was ever extinguished in him—before death. When he died in this marvellous fashion (as though his childhood were augmented towards the end, the *Zauberflöte* being the most childlike of his works), Mozart had accomplished a destiny the like of which has never been seen on earth again.

Doubtless the Salzburg pilgrimage was what we were ordained by time and glory to accomplish. We went there to restore to Mozart his true greatness, above all to reconcile him with himself, so that he might rejoin the soil of Salzburg in the dimension of the absolute. There was at Salzburg one man who was outstanding among the rest in his service of Mozart's renascent greatness: Bruno Walter. To him I dedicate these pages.

Translated by David Gascoyne.

G. F. GREEN

ROOM WANTED

*In these same streets you shall wander,
and in the same purlieux you shall roam . . .
There is no ship to take you to other lands, there is no road.
You have so shattered your life here, in this small corner
that in all the world you have ruined it.*

The afternoon was warm, where the peonies pressed large against palings sheltering the brick row fronts; and warm as breath in the narrow street. Thomas Clarke's shoes trod slowly the marred macadam, as if formed of the same material. Under a hazy middle distance of factories, an old man raked soil round his new green privet, which soon would smell. Clarke attended to all this, whilst he wanted merely a room. He was a spare young man, in a city suit, his worn pin-spot tie tight in his neat collar. A cheap rainproof damped his arm and his fingers ached stiffly at his laden suitcase. His hat was pushed from scant hair, his eyes steady or kind, but his face pale for want of sun or interest or action. As he glanced at the street sides, his mouth and hands were brief, as if the day strained his nerves.

He noticed the card FURNISHED ROOM TO LET, turning through the gap in the fence. He put down his suitcase and rapped. The door opened on an old decrepit woman, heavy in black worsted. Her smeared eyes stared, as if unaware of him or the sunny street, while by greyish strands of hair, her lower lip hung crumbled like bread. She breathed rhythmically as a clock. He saw her thick rucked stockings, her cracked shoes trodden at the ankles. He followed her into the hall, darkened suddenly as the door shut. A smell, stale though antiseptic, of his boyhood's Sunday School or, since, of a cheap woman's bedroom, of

secretive loathed work, mauled his face. He followed her up the close linoed stairs. She paused often for breath, but her fat hand on the banister dragged her on. They reached the top landing where she unlocked and pushed open a door.

"This is the room," she said.

She entered as if she inhabited this, as also the other rooms, her hand, dirt in its cracked nails, aiding her on the brass and black railed double bed, where a wool counterpane lay. She drew back soiled lace curtains from the french window. Dim light showed faded brown walls, the texts and pictures, the mirror above bric-à-brac on the draped mantelpiece. It fell as in the room of someone dead, yet but for them it was empty. She turned and watched him easing his hurt hand.

"How much do you want?" he said.

"Fifteen. It's what I've had up to now."

"Alright, I'll take it."

She moved across the threadbare carpet, whilst the room seemed airless, as if already he was alone.

"Wait."

He wished to talk to her, to make the most of his few instructions.

"There's a lady—a girl—coming to see me. Will you show her up? Her name's Ellen—Miss Ellen Reid."

"Who'll she ask for?"

"Mr. Clarke," he said. "Thomas Clarke."

He watched her hand seek the banister, going slowly down the tall stair well; then he shut the door on himself in the room. He saw the brown walls, the text at the bed head JESUS GUARD THY SLEEP, and the dull red carpet armchair, empty by the window. His hand traced the knitted counterpane, knowing the craving to touch and alter, to shift the derelict time away, waiting in an unoccupied room. He raised his suitcase on to the bed, nervously unpacking it. His familiar possessions, the shirts worn day to day, the broken hairbrush, the slippers, weighted his loneliness like mimicry. He put them in drawers, on the washstand, then turned toward the shut

window. A fire escape gripped the grey walled well, its iron perforated platform level with him. He watched it as if its dead lack of interest could make him one with it and lure him, whilst beyond, the smoky evening light crept on the slate roofs. A rap like a shot of dope in his limbs, jerked him round.

In the open door, a girl in white frock, slight blue coat and no stockings, came where the dark armed woman shut the door.

"Come in," he said.

Ellen lightly entered, a child—he remembered she was fifteen—laying her coat on the bed. Her lank limbs were bare, her throat, her face to her fair hair, cooler amidst the worn heavy room that scarcely held her, as a child, strayed into a cave, retains the daylight in its hands and eyes. She seemed to hold torn flowers from the fields. Her small alive gestures brought him to earlier days, breathing the cold air of a gully, where rowan dashed red drops to the falls, his wrists and face chilled with its secret, singing force. Watching her, he had to imagine her in that room, so far was the time and place they should have met in.

"Sit down," he said.

She sat in the armchair, her lithe arms on the pattern, where light fell from the shut window. He stared at her, whilst the room grew closer.

"You had a good journey?" he said. "Did you see Travers as I told you?"

"Yes, I saw him."

"When she died, your mother told Travers you were to see him, if I was away; or if I couldn't help you. Did he tell you? Was the journey alright from Newbridge?"

"Yes, it took about two hours."

"Not long."

He turned, pacing the thin carpet, where the airless room made the unseen dust warm, as if they were huddled in a den. He gazed at the dark, gilt-framed oil painting beyond the bed.

"Did you read," he said, "or look out of the window

on the journey?"

"I read a bit."

"What?"

He stared at the picture's brown-ochre, in its hard rich gold, echoed by the brass bed knob.

"It was about a wreck in Cornwall and two fishermen go in a cave and get trapped."

He was forced to look at her.

"Was it good?"

"Yes, I liked it."

The brown walls were like felt to the closed window. He saw the slight child, her tilt of nose and cheek, whilst the things of the room formed his words. He sweated with the need to flee.

"Have you your money on you?" he said.

"Yes."

He saw her eyes startle, the two curls dropped on her brow.

"Give it to me."

She sought in the low neck of her frock. The air crammed arid where a round sea view in crimson plush frame obsessed him. He leaned near her. His fingers almost touched hers on the notes, as if he would tear them, but her hand fell. He held the money, then threw it on the bed.

"What books do you read?" he said.

He grasped the rough chair back round her frail body.

"I don't know."

"Idiot," he said quietly. "What have you read?"

The room stifled him, where he saw her for an instant a scared child amongst it.

"What do you read?" he said. "Did you pass Craner's Iron Works in the train from Newbridge? Tell me."

She cringed frightened against the chair. He turned, his face drawn as if in pain, grasping the bed rods. He stared straight, but felt past his shoulder her hurt form like a wounded bird. His eyes fixed as through murk, on a parchment hair-tidy, its dry faded hair spilling through its torn sides. He clenched the smooth rail.

"Go from here," he said. "Do you hear, Ellen?"

She left the chair, picking up her coat and money from the bed.

"Get lodgings," he said, "and let me know. We haven't talked yet. We've arranged nothing."

The door shut, leaving him in the hot silence. He leapt forward, unlocked and flung open the window. Grey light fell on the roofs and the untenanted zig-zag of the fire escape. He stared blankly as if he saw these things outside for the first time. Then he sank against the curtains, crushed to his face like a child's lace handkerchief, where he breathed the cold air.

He reached toward the next night a fishing inn on a long lake, narrow between the dark green shouldered fells. He left his suitcase, and tired from his journey walked to the lake's edge. The evening was solitary, cold and clear as a bell, while grey water at his feet lapped the sleek stones and near a fence, a sheep cropped the reedy grass. Its sound spread from him through the dale, as if he were a stone flung in the still air. He stood and heard, and watched the hills, no more thinking. The swollen crash of a burn reached his mind, as if this were a huge mill where the slightest noise took aeons of time, the thin remote breath of peat logged marsh its only other product. Darkening, the senseless element possessed him, a tyrant releasing his limbs and mind to bondage. At the far end of the lake he saw a boat rowed under the fell's shade. He shivered, his face nervously set, as if someone trod his grave, then turned to the hotel.

In the well aired bedroom he took off his shirt, and washed from the blue flowered jug and bowl. The water struck cold to his hands and face. Wind from the fells stirred the fresh lace curtains, breathed on his bared back, to the clean fawn walls, where light failed as on the lake. He dried his fingers, pacing the carpet, as if to check time against a sure, feared yet needed assignation. As he tied his tie, he saw by the dim mirror, reflecting the brass and black railed bed, the round, red-plush framed sea view, so that

his throat and hands halted in drear anxiety. He felt the closer air, backing from the dusty, littered mantelpiece, till his fingers held the bed rails. The brown walls nearing him, narrowed his guts and mind, like a presence. His eyes stared through dusk at the increasingly familiar things with hatred and desire. The arid air throbbed in his throat as if he spoke. He swung, as if he already acted, and saw the carpet armchair before the grey, unstirred lace curtains, empty. Horror damped through him like cloth, whilst he drew from the bed, alone across the room, and fled.

Wherever he went, the solid hotel, slum, seaside apartment, the room after his first new relief closed on him. As he washed or lay in bed, he saw the text, the bric-à-brac, breathing the darker air. He was forced to act, yet amongst its familiar things, his eyes and hands found no one. The crowding absence tortured his limbs, his ignorant desperate mind, exhausting his strength. Intangible, he could not resist the lack of presence, which corrupted him each night in the dreadful fetid room, as decay must control his body. He knew only his weak hands on the bed rods, the suitcase handle, as haunted by this evil he fled. As weeks became months where he existed in impotent flight or search, he appeared ageless, his youth shrunk beyond its roots, as through deathly winter.

One evening he came down a damp street till he saw the card FURNISHED ROOM TO LET. He turned through the fence's gap across its rank garden and dropping his suitcase, knocked. An old woman let him in, leading up close lined stairs to the dark landing.

"This is the room," she said.

He entered the known room whilst the door closed. He saw the mantelpiece, the patterned carpet, the shut french windows. He inhabited there as a lifetime's hated home, feeling no longer strength nor desire to go. He lay defeated, by the brass and black rungs, the room absorbing him, his frayed suit, his inert arms and legs. It shaded his ashen face, his thin mute line of mouth, watching dusk fall on the fire escape through the soiled lace. He breathed rapidly, his

fingers crooked in the bedspread, when a knock tensed his brain. He leapt facing the door, as Ellen came, driving him in terror to the draped mantelpiece. Her limbs were naked, her child's astonished face, undefended to her bare hands. The room surrounded her like fog, caging her fresh voice.

"Tom, where have you . . ."

He backed to the carpet armchair. Her fair frail head passed the litter, the brown walls whilst the air dried as he crouched, staring at her. Her small throat paused by the hair-tidy's spilt dead hair, and she smiled. He could touch her. His face taut with decision, he grasped the chair.

"Get out," he screamed.

Silence held his voice. He threw back the window as if to leap, but chill air struck him. He fainted on the iron platform. The wind touched his face, calm featured like a youth's asleep. It stirred the light curtains in the clean, empty room.

STEPHEN SPENDER

SEPTEMBER JOURNAL

SEPTEMBER 3RD.

I am going to keep a journal because I cannot accept the fact that I feel so shattered that I cannot write at all. Today I read in the paper a story by Seymour Hicks of a request he gave to Wilde after his imprisonment, to write a play. Wilde said: "I will write a wonderful play with wonderful lines and wonderful dialogue." As he said this, Hicks realised that he would never write again.

I feel as if I could not write again. Words seem to break in my mind like sticks when I put them down on paper. I cannot see how to spell some of them. Sentences are covered with leaves, and I really cannot see the line of the branch that carries the green meanings.

It so happens that the world has broken just at the moment when my own life has broken. I mean not my life but my relationship with A——. Everything I read in the papers about broken faith, broken pledges, disloyalty, etc., seems about her. At the same time, not being a great statesman, I cannot use those words or call down the curses of God on her. For all I know, God may be on the side of the faithless, in private life, at all events. Or rather, I don't mean God, but that the very introduction of moral ideas makes everything, at this stage, meaningless. The moment I start thinking of right and wrong, I think, they may have done me a wrong, but I wonder Are they happy? Perhaps they have the secret of happiness, which I have lost. Perhaps their enjoyment of happiness makes them right and makes everything in my own mind, which is an endless argument, irrelevant.

Anyhow, I know that she cannot bear being with me when my forehead is split with anxiety. I drive a wedge through

her on those occasions and she makes me feel that I am being cruel to her and almost treating her violently.

The best thing is to write anything, anything at all that comes into your head, until gradually there is a calm and creative day. It is essential to be patient and to remember that nothing one feels is the last word; all feeling passes over one and as far as the life of the emotions goes there is only one rule: to wait. If Toller had waited, he would be one of the few people alive today who are happy about the war.

The most dangerous deception the emotions can practise on you is to pretend to be timeless and absolute. On top of despair, they impose a boredom which tells you that nothing is or ever will be worth doing, that all the words have broken into the separate letters of the alphabet and cannot be put together again. The whole of your life, they say, will be like this. Your unhappiness is no longer just a sensation, it is a fern growing through your whole body, and separating the brain. Not only is it going to be impossible for you now to do anything but just stare, without crystallizing your disparate sensations, but today too is expanding into an infinity of boredom. It is now ten o'clock, and one o'clock will not come: or not until a whole sea of empty agony has flooded your mind.

That is how Wilde must have felt sitting with his two boys at his marble-topped table in a café. That is how hundreds of people waiting for the News Bulletins on the wireless feel today. But there is another waiting which is not just the emptiness of waiting. That is the patient faith of waiting. Realising that everything is only an episode in the whole story, and that although one has no control over the episodes, one can gradually form the whole pattern, however terrible the setbacks of moments and even of years.

I must put out my hands and grasp the handfuls of facts. How extraordinary they are! The aluminium balloons seem nailed into the sky like those bolts which hold together the irradiating struts of a biplane between the wings. The streets become more and more deserted and the West End is full

of shops to let. Sandbags are laid above the glass pavements over basements along the sidewalk. Last night during the blackout there was a tremendous thunderstorm. We stood at the bottom of Regent Street in the pouring rain, the pitch darkness broken intermittently by flashes of sheet lightning which lit up Piccadilly Circus like broad daylight.

SEPTEMBER 4TH.

Greenwood and Sinclair were on the wireless last night. They talked about gallant Poland, our liberties, democracy, etc., in a way which raised very grave doubts in my mind. Greenwood even talked about fighting the last war to end war. Personally, I prefer Chamberlain's line to all this sanctimoniousness, which is that he has done his best to give Hitler everything but now feels that he can give nothing more. I dislike all the talk about God defending the right. God has always defended the right, and after such a long experience, he of all people should realise the utter futility of it. Personally, if I were a close adviser of God, I'd press him to decide the issue one way or the other once and for all and not go on playing this cat and mouse game between right and wrong.

The whole point of being a man is that there is no omnipotence on one's side. One doesn't have to choose between good and evil, right and wrong, but between various kinds of evil. It is not a conflict between God and the Devil, Christ and Judas, but between the systems represented by Hitler and Chamberlain.

With all humility, I am on the side of the Chamberlain system against Fascism. The fundamental reason is that I hate the idea of being regimented and losing my personal freedom of action. I carry this feeling too far, in fact, I must admit I carry it to the point of hysteria—i.e. the point where I would really fight. I dread the idea of being ordered about and being made to do what I don't want to do in a cause I hate. This fear has even forced me into a certain isolation, in which I find that the personalities of my fellowbeings often impose a restraint and unwelcome

sense of obligation on me.

There you are, you analyse your hatred of Fascism and it comes to a desire to be left alone. At school you allowed the other boys to take your possessions from you, but finally there was something which you fought for blindly—the possibility of being alone. When you felt that they were compelling you to be like them, and never to get away from their system and their standards, you bit and scratched. The same is true of all your relations with people. When you feel that another personality is obstructing the development of your own, you feel an embarrassment which is really the repression of rage.

Of course, there are other reasons, arising from this. As long as somewhere in society, in individuals, there are centres of isolation, there is also a possibility of development and change. Fascism is not even an aristocratic form of society in which the people at the top have windows in their minds, light within darkness, centres of air and space. They are just the levers which crush the lives below into a solid mass of weight and darkness. I am living all the time for the possibility of change. The life I love is now like a tepid current in a pond which threatens any moment to become one solid block of ice.

Well then, if war is madness and Hitler is mad, why reply to madness with madness? Why fight? Why not be a pacifist? The answers are (1) That I am not sufficiently a mystic to believe that if Hitler won we would not lose the values which I care about—the possibility of individual development, artistic creation and social change. (2) That in politics, the possibilities of acting effectively are always limited to certain very definite lines. They are not, as some people seem to imagine, extended to every possible idealistic and Utopian attitude. Given a war like the present, a pacifist is simply a person who has put himself politically out of action, and, who in so doing is probably helping the other side. Possibly helping the other side may sometimes further the cause of ultimate peace, but in this war I don't see how it can. Of course, there is a great deal to be got

out of refusing to touch evil, in the way of saving one's own soul and being an example to future generations. But actually, personal salvation and getting myself into a morally correct position superior to my contemporaries, don't appeal to me, perhaps because I don't believe in a system of rewards and punishments in an after life. If I ran away it would be because I wanted to save my skin or get on with my work, not because I felt that even the world at war was unendurably wicked.

SEPTEMBER 5TH.

Oh, but books are crammed with all these arguments. If I started making speeches I would use them, and as I did so, I would feel a growing doubt in my own mind about their validity. I would be saying to myself "Yes, I do, really and truly, believe that, so why is this doubt growing like a fungus in my mind? Why do I imagine that someone over there in the corner is sniggering? That that man with hair too far back over his temples and wearing a brown tweed jacket knows the answer to everything I am saying? Gradually Conviction is seeping out of the hall, like water out of a tank, with every word I say."

Doubtless my own contempt for my father's recruiting speeches during the War is what undermines my faith in political arguments. When I start a train of argument it is like one of those trains on the Berlin underground which strut confidently above the street on their raised viaducts, surrounded below by the tenements which seem to ask whether after all everything is going quite so well as the passengers, flashing through the slums, seem to think.

I shall try to recollect Germany as it was 1929-1932 when I lived there for several months of each year. The people I knew there were not like the present rulers of Germany, not like the S.S. men, not like the army, though I think I understand the army. Germans have a greater capacity, I should say, than any other people, of evoking the idea of peace—*Ruhe*. To us and to the French, peace is a negative state when we are getting on with our business

and private lives and are not at war. But to the Germans a state of peace is something positive and breathing and constructive, as opposed to a state of war. The positive idea of peace permeates a great deal of German romantic literature and music. Works like the slow movements of Beethoven's 2nd and 4th Symphonies are hymns to peace. They summon up a vision of a landscape exhaling peace. *Daemmerung* is a peaceful word, and words like *Heim*, *Heimat*, *Friede*, *Ruhe*, are loaded with a greater weight of emotion than the corresponding words in other languages. Other peace-music is Schubert's songs, Beethoven's early piano and piano-and-violin sonatas.

Perhaps it is that the German landscape is particularly peaceful. I think of the Rhine at evening, the Harz mountains, the shores of the Alster at Hamburg with the heavy scent of lime blossom on a summer evening.

I have a German relative who is the wife of a U-Boat Commander. They live in Kiel, which has just been bombed. She plays the piano very well. Recently she came to London and she played an early Beethoven Sonata to us at my grandmother's flat. After she had played the slow movement her face was streaming with tears. "Excuse me," she said, "but this music is so full of peace."

Ten years after the war, Germany was full of peace, it dripped with peace, we swam in peace, no one knew what to do with all the German peace. They built houses with flat roofs, they sunbathed, they walked with linked hands under the lime trees, they lay together in the pine forest, they talked about French art. Above all, everything was new, and everyone was young. They liked the English very much and they were sorry about the War. They talked about the terrible time they had during the inflation.

This was in Hamburg. I used to bathe, and I went to parties of young people. I had never enjoyed parties before and I never have since, but these were like living in the atmosphere of a Blue Period Picasso. Everyone was beautiful, and gentle, everyone was poor, no one was smart. On summer evenings they danced in the half light, and when

they were tired of dancing they lay down in the forest, on the beach, on mattresses, on the bare floor. They laughed a great deal, smiling with their innocent eyes and showing well-shaped, but not very strong, teeth. Sometimes they let one down, sometimes the poorer ones stole, for example, but there was no Sin. I am not being ironic. There really was no sin, like there is in this kind of life in Paris or London.

Of course, it was all very superficial, it has been blown away now. I could not dance. I could not speak German. I stood rather outside it. I think now of the sad refugees who were the exquisite, confident Students of the Weimar Republican days. Perhaps it was all fictitious, but now in letting the mirage fade from the mind, I got very near to the truth, because everything in Germany is inclined to be fictitious. The German tends to think of his life as an operatic cycle emerging from a series of myths. There was the War, then there was the Inflation, then there was the period of Youth and the Weimar Republic, then there was the Crisis, then there was Hitler. Every German can readily explain him- or herself in terms of What We Have Been Through.

This passive attitude to life, the tendency to consider oneself a product of circumstances and environment beyond one's control, gives one the connection between the breakdown of external standards and the private standards of people. A young man fighting in the Spanish War wrote a poem to his beloved, beginning:

“Heart of the heartless world.”

He was either optimistic or very lucky. It would have been truer to write:

“Heartless one of the heartless world.”

I was twenty in those days, and I was caught up mostly with the idea of Friendship—Freundschaft, which was a very significant aspect of the life of the Weimar Republic. This, if it was frank, was also idealistic. It was not cynical, shame-faced, smart, snobbish or stodgy, as so often in England. It was more like Walt Whitman's idea of

camaraderie. I admit that I do not feel at all easy about this now, but I set it down for what it was. Two friends, young men, faced the world together, they camped, they travelled, they were happy in each other's company. There was usually a certain unpossessiveness about these relationships, a certain casualness, a frank and promiscuous admiration of beauty. The Germans had a reputation at that time of being homosexual, but I think it would be truer to say that they were bisexual, though there were of course a few of those zealots and martyrs who really hate women, whom one finds everywhere. But what the young, free, handsome German looked for in the world was a reflection of his own qualities in either man or woman. It was part of the myth that he should 'travel light' and have no responsibilities.

A life in which people are exercising sexual freedom without, apparently, anyone suffering or paying for it in any way, is attractive. One wonders how it is done. In this case, I think it was done at the price of making everything exist on the same level. The new architecture, the Bauhaus at Dessau, the social equality, the most casual affair, marriage, an abortion, a party, were all just the same. They were a pack of cards all of equal value precariously built up, so that when one fell, the whole house came down.

* * * *

Again and again I had experience of the German ignorance of Jews. Later, when Christopher Isherwood and I were staying on Insel Ruegen, and when the Nazis were doing exercises every evening in the woods and the "movement" had become a serious menace, I got to know one or two of these young men. They were not gay, irresponsible, intelligent, like my Hamburg friends. They were heavy, stupid, but friendly and well-meaning. They seemed perfectly content to lounge round all day sunbathing, listening to the band, going to the dance hall in the evening and having their girls in the pine trees afterwards among the hungry mosquitoes. But actually their fun lacked lightheartedness. For instance, when they sunbathed,

they would build little forts for themselves on the beach, set up a flagpost, hoist a Nazi flag on it and gaze upwards in reverence. Whilst they were lounging round listening to the music, they seemed always to be waiting for a patriotic air, and when one was played, they would stand stiffly to attention.

I was with two of them on some such occasion as this when suddenly I lost my temper and said "Ich bin ein Jude!" They laughed incredulously: "You a Jew? Impossible. Why, you're the perfect Nordic type," said one of them. "You're tall, you have blue eyes, fair hair, Scandinavian features," said the other, "that's why we know and like you." This astonished me. "Then what do you think when you meet a Jew?" I asked. "We want to kill and destroy the pest," they said, "we want to crush him and knock him down." "Then knock me down," I said. "Here I am, I'm a Jew, please knock me down." They looked at me, dazed and injured by the deceptiveness of this wolf in Nordic clothing. I felt quite sorry for them. Then I got angry: "I don't believe you have any idea what a Jew looks like," I said. "You imagine a monster when really you have to deal with a human being. I don't believe you know what you're talking about, and your heads are stuffed with stupid hatred and lies." Probably I didn't know enough German to put it quite like that, but I worked myself up into a rage and rushed home to laugh with Christopher about it.

On another occasion someone made friends with me in a train specifically because I was of the Nordic type, and, indeed, now I know exactly the kind of warm response that a Nordic appearance arouses in some Germans. How can one understand the tremendous interest in appearance of a military race? A uniform face, in a uniform physique, dressed in uniform, and marching. In a way my Hamburg friends who wanted girls to be like boys and everyone to have a lovely face on a perfect body, had their craving for uniformity too.

Certainly, 1929 was the beginning of the slump and the

end of the efflorescence of the Weimar Republic. . . .

SEPTEMBER 6TH.

I want to go on about Germany, about my landlord in Berlin, about Curtius, but I feel too tired, I can't go on. The first thing about any war is that everyone is tired, countries at war are countries of tiredness, fatigue becomes a spiritual experience. It becomes an illumination, fetters of habit which make one wash and shave every day, which make one preface every contact with one's neighbour with embarrassment, fall away, and one enters into a more easy relationship with one's fellow beings, an exhausted simplified state of being oneself. The wrong words which come into one's mind, which the rigid discipline of wakefulness would reject, are suddenly the right ones, everything flows freely and nervously, one does not even resent the heavy weight on one's eyes, because one sees so much light.

There was an air raid warning last night. A—— seems so far away now, I imagine her in her red dressing gown and she looks pale and dazed. I don't imagine her happily. But I imagine her tenderly. Perhaps in a few days I'll be able to think about her without reproach. Perhaps I'll get tired enough during this war to forgive her.

I remember again the water, the flowing line of the hills, the rich harvest quality of Germany. Immediately, of course, I suspect it of a certain falsity, a certain coarseness and thickness and monotony of texture, but still it is there, there like Wordsworth's poem about the peasant girl. E. took me all over the place. He had a little car, and when he wasn't watching the road, his eyes were on me watching the effect of the storks on the roofs of North German villages, of monkeys playing at the Hagenbeck Zoo, of the Harz mountains. "If you like music we shall have a great deal in common," he said when we first met, and if ever I admitted for one moment that I appreciated anything, his eyes were ready to smile: "Ah, we have a great deal in common."

So we went to the Harz mountains stopping on our way

at Brunswick where we saw in a very dusty and deserted gallery one of the finest Rembrandt's I have ever seen. We visited some people called Harman who had a house in the Harz mountains. Like everyone else they had lost their money and all they had was the property itself and, I suppose, the salary of Professor Harman. The whole family, grandmother, son, daughter-in-law, a grandson, two daughters and a brother and sister who were fellow-students of Wolfgang, the son, at ——— University, were there. Like nearly everyone I met in Germany at this time, they were obviously living from hand to mouth, they spent what they had, they laughed and talked a great deal, and yet they had an air of having lost everything. Wolfgang had rather pinched, vague features which had a certain pallid, distracted beauty which attracted me at the time.

Several years later, after Hitler's rise to power, Wolfgang came to visit me in London. Earnest, and pale as ever, he had a mission: he wanted to convert me to Naziism. "Of course, there are things I do not like about the Nazis," he said. "I do not agree with their views on literature and art. I do not sympathize with the persecution of the Jews. I do not accept their explanation of the Reichstag fire (though there is more in it than you would think). I do not like Goebbel's propaganda. In fact, I dislike everything nasty about them. But all the same, they have a Faith." Here his fists clenched and his eyes burned with a dubious mystery. "They have restored to us our belief in Germany and Life. Some of them are Idealists. There is a good deal of socialism in their economy." I raged as I had done before. I told him that the most dangerous propagandists of Naziism were people like himself who pretended that they did not approve of its bad qualities and yet had accepted it. I told him he was a dupe, and that the Nazis wouldn't care a damn about his footling little qualifications to satisfy his own conscience, so long as they had got him where they had got him. I said: "If I were a German, as I well might be, I would by now either be in a Concentration Camp or else deprived of every means of earning my living.

You can't expect me to be fair. I don't care about your reasons." And I am ashamed to say that I kicked him out of the house.

This was an unnecessary piece of self-righteousness on my part, because I heard later that he became disillusioned about the Nazis and was one of those unhappy, pained, gentle creatures who represent the heart of another Germany, and do not understand what is happening to them. I have touched a deeper chord than I knew here, for have I not met two or three of them, don't I know very well the peculiar whiteness and stillness of their eyes, which seem to have been drained of pigment? These poor ghosts are really beautiful in a sexless way, because, if one is a young man of another era, naturally one cannot expect to be virile. How closely I press now upon a secret! Why am I always attracted by these desolate spirits? There was one whom I met on the Hook of Holland boat once shortly before Hitler's rise to power. He was the son of a general, and now that at least four names crowd on to me, I remember that they are all aristocrats and often close to the higher ranks of the army. I cannot remember the names exactly—oh yes, this boy was called Horst. He had a round face with very well-formed features, delicate lips, china blue eyes, a tender complexion and brown hair of an almost feathery lightness. He was quiet and polite, and he had some small out of the way interest (just as Wolfgang had a card-index in which he "collected" Shakespeare's imagery)—Horst's hobby was playing the flute or making musical instruments or something. There's really nothing much more to it than that. He had a Rhodes scholarship at Oxford and I used to call on him there and we went for walks and I introduced him to Shyah Berlin because he didn't seem to know anybody. But he never became part of the life at Oxford. He was always just as gentle, just as isolated, and gradually one saw beyond the varnish of his interest in the musical instrument—or whatever—to a distress and restlessness of spirit that never ceased. Shyah saw him several times and then confessed to me that the

sustained slight sense of his unhappiness was too much: he no longer cared to see him.

Another such was surely Jowo von M—— who wandered about Europe looking at pictures. They all had some mild objective interest which obviously was not their life, but which covered their refusal ever to speak about Germany. Perhaps, like Wolfgang, when the Nazis first came to power they flamed with a momentary hope which soon disappeared as they reverted to their former hobbies. Werner von L—— was a more energetic variation on this type of German. When I first met him he was an ardent Social Democrat, in fact he was literally holding up in his rooms at Oxford a red banner which a Jewish girl with whom he lived had embroidered for a Peace Procession. When the Nazis came into power he took the complicated view that this after all was perhaps the socialism he had been fighting for. He was a law-student and he pretended to admire enormously the legal code which the Nazis introduced with their revolution. He forced, rather cruelly, the Jewish girl (who still used to visit Germany and camp with him in the woods) to admire this masterpiece. She told me that although she did not agree with the treatment of the Jews, etc., nevertheless, the documents in which the new laws were codified were marvellous. It was pathetic. I showed my lack of understanding again by fulminating.

But the most remarkable case was that of the young aristocrat I met in Shyah's rooms only a few months ago. He was a Prussian and his name was Jobst. He had the fine looks of all these well-bred Germans, though in his case something seemed to have gone wrong. There were the blonde hair, the blue eyes, the well-defined bones and strong jaw, and yet in spite of its fine structure, his face seemed to have collapsed. Perhaps his mouth when in repose was almost too rich and well-formed, and when he moved it it seemed to become distorted and his lips to disappear inside his mouth. He was tall and strongly built, but his movements were so nervous, and the veins of his hands stood out so much and were yet so fine, that he seemed to be

pulled the whole time by hundreds of fine threads. We talked about music, for which he had a passion. I remember that, for some reason, we discussed love in music. But the idea of Germany hung over us, because he was going back there the next morning. His mother who was travelling with him was waiting somewhere a few doors away.

We stayed up till three o'clock, Shyah and Jobst talking without ceasing. I got very sleepy, so sleepy that I lay down on the sofa and attempted to doze off from time to time. But the spirit of Horst, of Werner von L——, of Wolfgang Harman, of Jowo von M——, was pacing the room, and would not let me rest. He did not really attempt to apologize when he said "Excuse me for keeping you up, but we shall never meet again." "Oh, nonsense," said Shyah. "No, no. It's not nonsense. I know it. We shall never meet again. This is our last day of peace together." He did not mention Germany. He only said: "It is very sad to leave Oxford. I shall never see anything of this again." Then he started once more on music, illustrating his conversation by singing, and conducting with his hands.

Next morning, he turned up again before breakfast. "I have not slept," he said, "I went to bed at three, lay down for three hours, and got up at six." "Why did you get up so early?" "Because it's my last morning and I shall never see Oxford again." He held out his long, expressive, conductor's right hand. Other people called, but even when Jobst was silent it was impossible to escape from his drama. He did not rest. When he stopped pacing round the room, he knelt down, with those speaking hands of his touching the carpet. The worst of it was that he was not an actor, he was by nature a quiet, scholarly person, with a rich inner life. Seeing him act was as unexpected and shocking as, say, seeing one's father cry.

SEPTEMBER 8TH.

When I come to think of it, the trouble with all the nice people I knew in Germany is that they were either tired or weak. The young people in Hamburg were tired, the

young Nationalist aristocrats were weak. How are the people of good will today to avoid weakness and fatigue?

SEPTEMBER 9TH.

Yesterday morning while I was waiting for a 'bus, some soldiers passed down the road singing "It's a long way to Tipperary." An unshaved and very ragged old tramp wearing the ribbons of several medals so loosely attached to his coat that they were almost falling off, said to me: "They're singing now, but they won't be singing when they come back. Hearing 'em sing reminds me of when I went out to fight in them trenches. We went out singing, but we didn't sing for long."

In the afternoon I got a taxi to Waterloo before going into the country. We were stopped near Southampton Row by five Frenchmen carrying a flag and singing the Marseillaise. The taximan said to me: "They won't be doing that for long."

Peter Watson travelled from Paris to Calais a few days ago in a troop train. The compartment was crowded with soldiers. They sat all the way in absolute silence, no one saying a word.

SEPTEMBER 10TH.

"The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity."

W. B. Yeats, who wrote these lines, himself became a fascist sympathiser. He was prepared to accept the worst. He wanted strength at any price.

Why were the gentle and kind people I knew in Germany, tired or weak?

The tiredness of our generation consists in exploring unimportant and superficial aspects of the idea of freedom, without trying to discover the strong basis on which any really free life must be built. Freedom, the young people in Hamburg said, is sexual freedom primarily, then freedom to enjoy yourself, to wander, not to make money, not to have the responsibility of a family, or the duties of a citizen,

generally. Freedom is one long holiday. They were tired. What they wanted, in fact, was a holiday.

Beware of people who explain themselves in terms of the difficult childhood they have had, the economic conditions of their country since the war, and everything, in short, that they have been through. Beware of people who say: "You don't understand me."

After 1929, it became obvious that the world of these irresponsible Germans was threatened.

"New styles of architecture, a change of heart."

The architecture was mostly swimming baths built with money raised from American loans. The change of heart, sunbathing and sexual freedom, was almost as uneconomical an investment as the new architecture. That's to say, although it produced a charming little shoot, it didn't take root in the stony and barren soil of the difficult post-war years.

I feel uneasy about discussing these things in an airy, Left Book Club manner, suddenly identifying myself with the Workers, in order to sneer at the people with whom I spend my week ends, and dismissing my own promiscuous past as though I have renounced it finally. The fact is that I have just had a first class failure in my personal life, and I am so full of regret and bitterness that I cannot stay in the country because I dream of nothing else.

However, important as these things are, the first sign of the "German tiredness" is to treat them as though nothing else were more important. My friends in Hamburg behaved as though nothing mattered in life except sex and personal relationships, and at the same time they kept these problems in a state of perpetual, unsolved, pleasurable suspense.

But if a human relationship becomes more important than anything else in two people's lives, it simply means that there is a lack of trust between these two people. A relationship is not a way of entering into a kind of dual subjectivity, a redoubled and reciprocal egotism, it is an alliance of two people, who form a united front to deal with the problems of the outside world, and who understand that their trust

in each other will not be broken up by impertinent outsiders. The problem of married people is not to become absorbed in each other, but how not to become absorbed in each other, how, in a word, to trust one another, in order to enter into a strong and satisfactory relationship with the society in which they live.

A great cause of weakness today is people putting less important things before those that are more important, for example, personal relationships before work and an objective philosophy of life, sex before love. People who put personal relationships before their work become parasites on each other, form mutual admiration societies, agree to do nothing that may make one jealous of the success in the world of the other. People who put sex before love flee from one marital relationship to another, using love as their excuse; because, for them, sex has become a thing in itself, dissociated from personal relationships. They have an image in their minds of one hundred per cent. sexual satisfaction, and when they are in love, they are continually asking themselves "Am I satisfied?", and they are continually tormented by the thought that perhaps they are not. For them love, at first an opportunity, soon becomes a trap, forcing them to give something instead of taking all the time, and preventing them from grasping at the possibly greater delights they might get elsewhere.

Satisfactory personal relationships exist when the people who enjoy them have a satisfactory relation with society. They exist within society, they are not a conspiracy against society. In the same way, satisfactory sex exists within love and can be attained through love, which means patience and loyalty and understanding.

Another cause of weakness is not to admit, but to pursue our failures blindly. There is such a thing as real failure in personal relationships and in sex. How easily then, that which symbolises failure, the poor substitute improvised for love, becomes the most important thing in life! How people build it up and call the scars of failure their dazzling successes! Masturbation, homosexuality, following people

in the streets, breaking up relationships because one has failed in one's own, all these compensatory activities form a circle of Hell in which people can never rest from proving that their failures are the same as love. Yet the lives of countless men and women show that the great compensation lies in accepting failures as failures, and recognizing substitutes as substitutes, and making the most of the rest of one's life. In fact the great artists and poets have almost without exception been failures in life. By this I mean that their relations with their fellow beings were really and truly at some point unsatisfactory, that most of them were fully conscious of this, and that their honesty in admitting a defect restored to their lives a sense of scale which hopelessly neurotic people lack. Baudelaire's relationship with a negress, the breakdown of Gauguin's marriage which led him to go to the South Seas, Van Gogh's failures in love, Rilke's wanderings and sense of being *outside* love, to mention only a few examples which immediately come to mind, were all real failures in life and to "the man of genius" the failure to be a complete man must always be a humiliation. The compensations of genius are so dazzling that it is difficult to realise that Beethoven and Balzac paid so great a price, when they yet had the infinite privilege of being Beethoven and Balzac. They suffered as men, they rejoiced as creators.

The creative artist realises that art is not a complete life, otherwise he would be self-sufficient, he would isolate himself from the world of ordinary living, and there would be happy, unreal artists creating a truly pure art. Some people, who are not artists, or who are bad artists, think that art is like this, a world cut off from the world, where aesthetic experience is everything. These are the virtuosi of art and of appreciation: spirits which have flowed completely into an aesthetic medium, without the friction of living their lives.

Of all the arts, music provides the most self-sufficient alternative world removed from the real world. Painting is the most objective of the arts because visual imagery always has a direct reference to real objects, and in order

to get away from the broad day, painters have deliberately to paint visual experiences remembered from sleep—dreams. But music is not a dream that imitates our sleep, it is a world of its own, full of abstract aural patterns, which are not recognizably related to the noises we hear in everyday life. At the same time it creates a world of tremendous conviction. The absolute ideas which have such a wavering meaning in words and which it puzzles us to attach to human behaviour, have their fixed places in music. Schiller's *Ode to Liberty* is a work which conveys little more to us today than a sense of enthusiasm for ideas which meant a great deal to Schiller but which the time between him and us has cast a doubt if not a slur upon. But in the music of the last movement of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony these ideas are fixed in a world of their own which one can enter without referring it back to the real world and the disillusion of the past hundred years.

Actually the value of the music lies in the fact that it does nevertheless refer back to the real world of experience. The triumph of art is not merely a triumph over technical difficulties, but the triumph of resolving the conflicts of life into a more enduring form of acceptance and contemplation. To regard these great acts of acceptance—the masterpieces of art—as acts of rejection and escape, is simply a way of losing grip, it is letting the engine run without the wheels turning. If one looks at the faces of people in a concert one can see the difference between those who use music as a form of living and those who use it as a form of dying. The virtuoso of listening is, like the virtuoso of performing, a wonderful child, one who has never grown up but melted himself on the furnace of great works of art where he continually flows away. The people who are not virtuosos have a certain sculptural rigidity—the face of Schnabel or Toscanini—because they are always discovering a unity between the experiences of life and art.

The young aristocratic sons of German militarists whom I call “weak”, were trying, without much conviction, it is true, to use the appreciation of art as a complete way of

living, and as an escape from their despair about Germany. But this does not work. You go to the concert and music offers an interior life of sounds inside your head which is as complete as anything you have experienced. You read a play of Shakespeare, and you enter into a love and a courage of feeling completer because more explicit and final than anything that your own life may provide. "This is where I live most intensely," you think. "This is real for me. Everything else can be put aside and forgotten." But it can't. The felt life in the work of art is only intense, and often painful, because it actually touches the life of deep and terrible experience. Without this experience, art would simply express a frictionless tendency towards a vacuous perfection. But in true art there is a real conflict of life, a real breaking up and melting down of intractable material, feelings and sensations which seem incapable of expression until they have been thus transformed. A work of art doesn't say "I am life, I offer you the opportunity of becoming me." On the contrary, it says: "This is what life is like. It is even realer, less to be evaded, than you thought. But I offer you an example of acceptance and understanding. Now, go back and live!"

(to be continued)

LOUIS MACNEICE

DUBLIN

Grey brick upon brick,
 Declamatory bronze
 On sombre pedestals—
 O'Connell, Grattan, Moore—
 And the brewery tugs and the swans
 On the balustraded stream
 And the bare bones of a fanlight
 Over a hungry door
 And the air soft on the cheek
 And porter running from the taps
 With a head of yellow cream
 And Nelson on his pillar
 Watching his world collapse.

This was never my town,
 I was not born nor bred
 Nor schooled here and she will not
 Have me alive or dead
 But yet she holds my mind
 With her seedy elegance,
 With her gentle veils of rain
 And all her ghosts that walk
 And all that hide behind
 Her Regency façades—
 The catcalls and the pain,
 The glamour of her squalor,
 The bravado of her talk.

The lights jig in the river
 With a concertina movement
 And the sun comes up in the morning
 Like barley-sugar on the water

And the mist on the Wicklow hills
Is close, as close
As the peasantry were to the landlord,
As the Irish to the Anglo-Irish,
As the killer is close one moment
To the man he kills,
Or as the moment itself
Is close to the next moment.

She is not an Irish town
And she is not English,
Historic with guns and vermin
And the cold renown
Of a fragment of Church latin,
Of an oratorical phrase.
But O the days are soft,
Soft enough to forget
The lessons better learnt,
The bullet on the wet
Streets, the crooked deal,
The steel behind the laugh,
The Four Courts burnt.

Fort of the Dane,
Garrison of the Saxon,
Augustan capital
Of a Gaelic nation,
Appropriating all
The alien brought,
You give me time for thought
And by a juggler's trick
You poise the toppling hour—
O greyness run to flower,
Grey stone, grey water
And brick upon grey brick.

RHYS DAVIES

THE WAGES OF LOVE

It was a wet early November evening when Olga, after twelve years' disgraceful absence, arrived home again. The rusty mountains wept, the bobbing chrysanthemums in the back-gardens were running with liquid coal-dust. A wind whipped through the dirty valley and rubbed stingingly at her silken legs. Above her ginger fur coat her sick done-in face peered like someone in awful woe.

She found no welcome. No one to meet her. Leaving her bags at the station, she climbed a steep road among sullen stony dwellings flung down like sneers on the world. At one of these, the nineteenth in a long row, she knocked timidly, her tongue licking over her dry lips. Wagons clanked under the slope below, backing out of the colliery yard. A woman in a shawl and man's cap hurried past, carrying a jug. After a long interval, the door opened and a bulky woman stood there, on her face a frown ready to develop into active hostility. The two were sisters.

"Sara," murmured Olga timidly, "you got my telegram?"

"Yes, I did. Telegram indeed! A fit I nearly had. Thought someone was dead. 'Stead of which," she added in great grievance, "you it is." After blocking the doorway during this and narrowly scrutinizing her sister and the fur coat, she stood aside grudgingly. "I s'pose you'd better come in. But I wonder you didn't go to Mary Ann's house, not come here. . . . I hope the neighbours haven't seen you," she went on in aversion.

Falteringly Olga entered. From the ajar doorway down the dark passage came subdued murmurs. "There's some of the family," Sara said, adding jeeringly: "Come to have a look at you. Go in."

Olga shrank. But hadn't she come back to seek forgive-

ness! And to mortify her wicked flesh! Entering the kitchen, she made an effort to strengthen her sagging neck, that was still lovely, but once had been proud as a swan's. Around the family hearth of her childhood a ring of hostile faces looked up in the red firelight. Red angry faces.

This was the Prodigal Daughter: the Black Sheep: the Family Disgrace. Whose tricks (they declared, in spite of an operation for gall-stones) had sent her mother to the grave, her father following not long afterwards. This was she who had wounded irreparably the family honour, stained its chaste history. Her sisters never sat in chapel now but with deflated seats.

"Fur coat, ha!" Blodwen, her other sister, screeched. "Come down here to show-off, has she!"

"More likely," Sara barked, "down and out she is, and come to live on our poor backs. They got to dress up. Strumpet!"

"Light a lamp," called Twmos, Blodwen's husband, "and let us see her plain." The lamp was lit. They saw her pinched defeated face, her sunken eyes, and their power rose.

"What you come back for?" cried Blodwen, blue with rage. "Don't the men look at you no more?"

"Hush, the neighbours will hear," exclaimed Sara. "And she must be hid."

"Only a coffin'll ever hide the same as her," groaned Blodwen.

Sara's husband Evan, with his face like a pious goat, sharpened his two front teeth on his lip. He had never seen the famous sister before. The two men were dominated by their bellicose wives, and looked at her bleakly down their noses. She stood mute and haggard amid the jabbering abuse. It was her punishment and she accepted it. After a while she sank into a chair and bowed her head. Desolate silence was in her broken eyes. She looked like one who bled from some awful secret agony.

"What's come of that elderly brush-manufacturer that kept you?" taunted Sara. "Left you in the gutter, no

doubt."

"And the grand foreigner with the diamonds," sneered Blod. "Looking for someone younger now, eh?"

"And the big stockbroker with the gouty feet, ha? And the fifty more! Hussy!" screamed Sara, forgetting the neighbours in her wrath. "She comes back like a bag of bad old 'tatoes."

Evan lifted his two teeth: "Miss Olga, sloppy it is to come back here tail between legs. Foreign to us you are now."

At last Olga whimpered: "I want to come back and rest; I want, I want—" The hot kitchen swirled round her, she flopped off the chair to the floor. They stared at her in anger.

"Damme, ill she is," said Twmos.

"A glass of cold water chuck in her painted face," sang Blod.

"Put her to bed here I shall be obliged to!" wailed Sara. "In my clean sheets! What's the matter with the duffer."

They had planned to send her flying, after they had unloaded their opinions of her, up to Mary Ann's cottage hidden in the mountains. Mary Ann was the fourth sister and not quite right in the head. She was to keep the trollop where no one would see her. But what did the disgrace want to come back for! Was she greedily after her share of goods left by poor mam and dad that she had sent to the grave? She shouldn't have it, the bad ape.

"Her fine feathers been plucked proper, plain it is," declared Blod. "Something bad's the matter with her. Best to put her to bed, Sara," she added, gratified that the baggage wouldn't be sullyng *her* house, down the valley. "And throw her out soon as she's got her legs back."

It had to be done. But for some days Olga tossed in a fever. No doctor was called, and the presence of the disgrace was kept secret from the district. All the family were great members of Salem, the Baptist chapel on the hill: Blod's husband was even a deacon. Horrible if it was found that

the outcast had come back. But more horrible still if she died on them, so that her sinful carcase would have to be buried from Sara's clean house. The provoked Sara nursed her with malign art, not wanting her to die and yet wanting it. She said presently to the wan thin woman: "Broth you want, and poultry—for out of my house you must get, quick. Haven't you got no money? Only a few shillings there is in your purse. Coming back here," she began to rage, "and expecting hard-working persons to feed your useless flesh. Ach, you bitch, get better."

"I'm thirsty," Olga whimpered.

"Well," jeered Sara, "think I've got champagne for you!"

Olga then whispered this: "I've got over five hundred pounds in the bank."

Sara laid down the cup of cold water she was bringing and excitedly called downstairs to the kitchen: "Evan, put the kettle on. Poor Olga would like a cup of tea. Fetch nice cakes from the shop and a pot of bloater paste." To Olga she said: "There now, there now, very upset I've been, and my tongue running away with me. But nursing you I've been like a hospital. See, there's better you are! Let me comb your hair and wash your face tidy now."

And she freshened the room. The dusty ewer on the washstand she cleaned and filled with water, brought a tablet of scented soap and a new pink towel; she plucked chrysanthemums from the back-garden. Then, after feeding the trollop, she took shawl and umbrella and rushed down to her sister Blod's house.

Olga didn't get well, however. Some days she opened her empty eyes and whimpered that she wanted to go to chapel, other days she cowered down in the sheets and wouldn't speak. Something awful was consuming her. But visitors began to fill her room, including cousins and aunts and uncles from right down the valley, who used to declare that never would they go near her—no, not even to attend her funeral. Only Mary Ann, being in her head but fourteen ounces to the pound, was kept out of the news

The first visitor was Blodwen, who brought a tapioca pudding and wheedled:

"Olga, you never seen my son Ivor! Growing up he is now and wants to be a Baptist Minister. But there's expensive are the college fees! 'Oh dear me,' I said to him, 'no, Ivor, you must go and work in the pits like your father, for poor as dirt are your hard-working parents.' But wouldn't it be grand for our family, Olga, if we had a chapel minister in it! Our sister Sara was saying it would wipe out a lot, indeed."

Cousin Margiad appeared and said: "Well, Olga! When better you are a visit you must pay me. But very poor my house is—my Willie John hasn't been working for two years. I been praying a long time for a suite of furniture for the parlour, then I could take a school-teacher lodger—"

Sara asked with loving bullying: "Your will you've made, Olga? Better you're getting, but best it is to be on the safe side, and if you go before me I'll bury you first-class, I promise. To go on with, shall I borrow ten quid off you at once? Wages been dropping in the pit," she groaned, "and if I don't find money soon, bums will be knocking on the door and turn us all out."

Aunt Gwen boldly asked for a piano and a pair of tortoiseshell glasses to replace her old pince-nez. Evan asked for a motor-bike and Twmos wanted a pair of greyhounds.

They walked in and out of her room daily, waiting till she was well enough to grant their requests. Sara got her bags up from the station and was astonished at the silks and satins therein: she tucked them away in her cupboards. Carefully she fed Olga with broths, to keep her a while from Jordan's brink. Not that Olga would eat much. Her great hollow eyes stared emptily, her wrinkling flesh had no more life than tissue paper.

At last Sara cried out in curbed exasperation: "What's the matter with you? Repenting too much you are. Bad you've been, but others in this world have been badder. Tell me now when you're ready for that cheque book out

of your bag."

Olga babbled strangely: "I want to go to chapel next Sunday." She wanted to go to Salem, the chapel of her childhood, where she had been pure!

"No, no," said Sara hurriedly, "not yet. Very cold it is there, the heating system's broken down." And downstairs she said to the family: "Is she going daft like our Mary Ann! Wants to go to chapel, if you please, like we do!"

"She started to go wrong," Blod mused, "after Johnny Williams got killed." Johnny had courted Olga long, long ago, till he got caught under a fall of roof in the pit. In the far-away days of her chaste girlhood.

Sara said: "There's a lesson to us all she is! No kick in her now. Falling apart she is like a rotten old cask."

"Yes," Blod began to screech, "but she's been dancing her jigs plenty in London while we stayed by here respectable and working our fingers to the bone."

They resumed their wheedling of the ailing slut: they put pen into her yellow hand and promised visits to chapel when she was better. And before long Blod got two hundred pounds for the education of her son Ivor: the rest of the family, desirous of the glory of a minister therein, agreed she had first claim. But all the others too, except Mary Ann, got their advantages from her repentance, the purchases ranging in size from a suite of furniture down to a hymn-book in soft black leather. Sara paid off the mortgage she had raised on the house: times had been bad in the pits. Then, all this done, she went bustling upstairs one dark evening.

"Get up, Olga. Arranged we have for you to go and stay with Mary Ann. Very healthy up there in the mountains, you will get well quicker. Come now." Olga wept and moaned. But her sister pulled the thin, shrinking body out of the bed and shoved old garments on it. In the deserted lane back of the house was Evan with his new motor-bike. Olga, shivering and dazed in the winter damp, was strapped to him behind.

Off they went. Up the valley and bumping across a naked

mountain by the Old Roman road: down to a vale where there was only a little pit and a couple of farms. Then up the side of a dark mountain, sour in the winter, where sheep coughed. Mary Ann's cottage clung to its side like a pimple. The cottage smelt of the dozen cats that she worshipped. She squinted down dubiously at her panting sister as the bike whizzed away, and said: "Drat me, Olga, don't know I do how there's room for you and the cats in my bed. But we'll manage."

Mary Ann was good-hearted: her mind had never opened properly, and it purred like her cats. The damp cottage was small as a hen-house: every day she walked two miles to work at a farm, earning seven shillings a week and milk for the cats. She was strong, chewed shag, and spat on the floor like a man. Olga's past life was vague in her mind.

"Let me sleep," whimpered Olga; "I want to sleep. Then when I'm better we must go to chapel. I want to sing and pray." Her quenched face had gone stiff as a dead sparrow. The cats jumped about her, frisky: some were wild as the mountain wind gnawing at the cottage.

Picking her nose, Mary Ann cogitated. "Where's your husband?" she said at length.

Moaning, Olga wept in misery and repentance: "I've been a bad woman."

"All of us are bad women," said Mary Ann comfortably, "here below." But her mind couldn't stay fixed for long on anything and she said, "Let me see if I can spare a drop of milk from the cats' suppers. There's hungry the little angels are always! Cold in the face you look." She spared a small cup of the bluish mountain milk.

Olga did not get well up in the mountain cottage. And even Mary Ann began to grumble at the tossings and weepings beside her in the bed: the cats were disturbed. Sometimes Olga cried out loud in her agony of spirit. During the day she tried to read the Bible, but there was little strength in her arms to hold up the stout book. One cat there was who became enamoured of her and leapt on her shoulders continually. Her soul began to gutter out

completely. One night she panted for a minister to be brought her.

"Hush," scolded Mary Ann gently, "past ten o'clock it is and Mr. Isaac Rowlands is cosy in bed by the side of his wife with her red hair."

"I want to confess," moaned Olga.

Mary Ann soothed: "Old he is and never climbs mountains. You tell me the confess tomorrow and I will deliver it with his milk on the way home. There now, go to sleep."

The next day Olga, alone in the cottage, wandered out in a daze, her nightshift flapping about her bony body. All around the mountains spread gleaming white and pure as the mountains of heaven. Crying for God's minister, she was found by a shepherd in the vale and shoved into the policeman's cottage. Delivered back to Mary Ann, in a week she was dead.

Mary Ann, excited, stayed away from the farm and walked over the mountain to Sara, who called a conference. And the purring Mary Ann was told: "Buried from your cottage she must be, quiet by there. A grand coffin will be sent up to you, and one hearse."

"And carriages too," said Mary Ann placidly, "for the mourners." She was proud to have a funeral start from her house.

"No mourners," shouted Sara, who was wearing a fine silk blouse. "She don't deserve it, the life she led. Good people don't sit behind a Jezebel, alive or dead."

The cheapest coffin in Undertaker Jenkins' price-list arrived in Mary Ann's cottage. But she said to the bringer: "The day of the funeral send one carriage up to follow the hearse. For me, and cost to be paid by me, Mary Ann." The funeral day, however, Sara took it into her head to come over, in a tight ginger fur coat, and when she saw the carriage drive up with the hearse and Mary Ann ready in black, she pushed the shocking woman into a chair and hissed: "You want to disgrace the family, you stupid rabbit!" For ten minutes she forced into Mary Ann's mind knowledge of Olga's wickedness: in the end Mary Ann sat

with dropped jaw and popping eyes.

So it was that an empty carriage went behind the thin narrow coffin that had no varnish on its wood, no flower on its breast.

The disgrace safely underground, not long afterwards Blod brought up to Sara's house the first letter from her college boy and, settling her new glasses, read it out to the assembled family. He was doing fine and asked for a new black suit.

"That'll be a day," sighed Sara, "when we hear his first sermon."

Evan lifted his goat's teeth: "Perhaps a comfort it'll be to Olga too, where the mare is, down in the hot."

"Do not speak disrespectful of the dead, Evan," admonished Blod prudently. She folded the letter away into her new leather handbag. "Poor Olga!" she mused. "And she so pretty at one time. I used to brag about her in Sunday-school, long ago. Her face was bright as a daisy and her bosoms like spicy fairy-cakes." She shook her new gay earrings. "But too soft she was, too loving."

"Yes, indeed," sighed Sara, who was altering a pink silk petticoat that was too small for her, "and no head for business. A softie like our Mary Ann. Not a diamond ring on her finger, and there's paltry in the bank, when you come to think of all those years!"

GEORGE ORWELL

THE LESSONS OF WAR

Warfare by Ludwig Renn (Faber & Faber 8/6). *Prelude to Victory* by Brig.-Gen. E. L. Spears (Cape 18/-).

We shall never know just how many books entitled *Storm over Blank* were scrapped on that fatal morning when the Russo-German pact was announced, but a glance at the publishers' lists suggests that it must have been a good number. Ludwig Renn's *Warfare*—a study of war throughout the ages, from a Marxist angle—is one of those unlucky books that happened to be finished just a few weeks too early. In spite of some interesting passages dealing with warfare in ancient and medieval times, it is very largely vitiated by being written with one eye on the approaching world-war, which Renn assumes as a matter of course to be a war of "the democracies" against all three of the Axis powers. No doubt it is hardly necessary to point out in what way this colours his theories. But what is intellectually contemptible is that if Renn were writing the book now, and if he has remained a "good party man", as I assume he has, he would be saying almost the exact opposite of what he said only a few months ago. The pity is that at bottom he has by no means the "good party man's" stamp of mind. Underneath the emigré Marxist there is still the Prussian soldier, tough, realistic and interested in such things as the marching-speeds of armies and the effective range of Roman catapults. He would be qualified to write a truly interesting history of the art of war. But not to the tune of "When Stalin turns we all turn", a motto which practically guarantees that a book will be out of date three months after it is written.

Brigadier-General Spears's book is something completely different from this. It is a detailed account of the events leading up to the unsuccessful French offensive of 1917

(Nivelle's offensive), under which there lies a story of the greatest psychological interest. No doubt the general outline of the 1917 campaign is well known. After Joffre was retired, General Nivelle, an officer who had had brilliant minor successes at Verdun, was put in supreme command of the French armies, and also, for the duration of the forthcoming battle, of the British armies. He proceeded to develop the limited offensive which Joffre had been planning earlier into a huge frontal attack which was to drive the Germans off French soil once and for all. The attack was prepared during the terrible winter of 1916-17—the Germans, meanwhile, having retired to the Hindenburg Line, systematically devastating the country as they went—and was finally delivered late in the spring of 1917. The minor British operation at Vimy Ridge was successful, but the main French attack was a ghastly failure, leading to absolutely nothing except a hundred and fifty thousand casualties, and, a little later, large-scale mutinies.

What gives the story its interest is the quite evident fact that hardly anyone who was in a position to judge believed that the offensive could succeed. Nivelle and a small group of officers surrounding him believed in it, a very few politicians believed in it, and the rank and file believed in it; but practically everyone between, including all Nivelle's army commanders, knew perfectly well that it was foredoomed to failure. Why then was the offensive ever attempted? General Spears's book is the answer to that question, and incidentally it is a sidelight on the extraordinarily complex nature of operations of war.

Some of the reasons for the idiotic ways in which wars are usually conducted are easy enough to imagine. To begin with, there is the innate stupidity of soldiers, and also the interference of politicians who are ultimately in control but whose technical ignorance puts them at the mercy of any soldier they happen to be talking to at the moment. Nivelle's appointment had in the first place been due chiefly to Lloyd George, who was anxious for a united command and was justly doubtful of Haig's intelligence. But the chief reason

why the meaningless attack went forward seems to have been that such operations are so vast that it is impossible to see them in perspective. A general preparing a great battle is for the time being one of the central figures of the world. Hundreds of millions of eyes are fixed upon him, and he knows it; from his point of view the battle becomes after a while an end in itself, practically without reference to its possible results. Then there are the evil effects of military discipline, which makes it impossible for a soldier to criticise his superior officer to his face. And there are the still more evil results of conferences and councils of war, at which people are driven by the mere fact of opposition into defending theories they do not believe in, and at which all kinds of political and personal jealousies are raging beneath the surface. Throughout the period when the attack was being prepared there were a number of inter-allied conferences, all beginning and ending in much the same way. One of Nivelle's generals would breathe his doubts to some politician, who would fall into a panic and demand a conference. At the conference the doubting general, under his commander's eye, would deny that he had ever had any doubts, and Nivelle would emerge more confident than ever, having won over his colleagues the victory which it was impossible for him to win over the Germans. It is a great pity that General Spears did not include an account of the Parliamentary commission which was held after the attack had failed, because it might have made clear to what extent Nivelle really believed in his own plans and to what extent he was simply clinging to the supreme command. It is certain that the most petty circumstances helped the foredoomed offensive on its way. General Spears records (Winston Churchill says the same thing in his history of the Great War) that Colonel D'Alençon, Nivelle's chief-of-staff, was one of the most passionate advocates of the attack and put difficulties in the way of any officer who brought unfavourable reports. D'Alençon was rapidly dying of tuberculosis, and his one remaining wish was to see a great French victory before he died and before the Americans

arrived. Even the fact that Nivelle was a Protestant endeared him to certain French politicians of the Left and made his position securer.

But in any case, when such operations are once started it is almost impossible to stop them. To make ready for a battle involving two million men is a colossal undertaking, meaning months of intensive work by tens of millions of people. Behind the waiting armies the factories are working night and day, hundreds of miles of roads and railways are being constructed, shells are being piled up in enormous dumps, hospitals, aerodromes and concrete gun-emplacements are being built in places where they will be useless if the battle does not happen, politicians and tame labour leaders are touring the country, making speeches, tens of thousands of typewriters are clicking, money is being poured out in scores of millions. And behind everything is public opinion, which has been keyed up to such a pitch of expectation that even a bloody defeat—which can always be temporarily passed off as a victory—will be less disastrous than no battle at all. By the late spring of 1917 it would probably have been impossible to call Nivelle's offensive off, although by that time only a handful of people above the rank and file believed in it. It came about by an interaction of huge and petty causes, rather as a young man drifts into a marriage that does not suit him or a bank-clerk's wife is manoeuvred against her better judgement into ordering a new vacuum-cleaner. Only in this case it happened to involve the lives of two million men, not counting Germans.

General Spears stops abruptly with the failure of the offensive and does not mention the great mutinies that followed soon afterwards—a pity, because he no doubt knows a good deal about them. The mutinies were an event of great historical importance, and the memory of them will probably have its effect on the strategy of the present war. Possibly General Spears feels that mutinies are not the kind of things that ought to be mentioned, but that is not the impression that he gives. He is a plain-speaking, not to say indiscreet writer. Those who read his earlier book, *Liaison*

1914, will remember its curious mixture of detailed first-hand information and violent partisanship. He had been liaison officer between the British Army and the French V Army during the retreat from Mons and Charleroi, and in his book he was probably unfair to General Lanrezac, whose retreat from the Belgian frontier was certainly hasty but did at least save his army from being enveloped. The various controversies which raged for years over the 1914 campaign were mixed up with Anglo-French jealousies, and in spite of his literary gifts General Spears saw things from the angle of a British professional soldier. The Entente Cordiale rocked on its foundations when he overheard Lanrezac quoting Horace in the middle of a battle. *Liaison 1914* was nevertheless an outstanding book, full of pictures of the retreat which one remembers years after reading them. *Prelude to Victory* is less controversial but has the same vivid quality. Evidently the special position of a liaison officer, who knows more about the plan of campaign than an ordinary officer but at the same time is constantly seeing the miseries of the front-line troops, makes for the writing of a good war-book. The photographs, as in the earlier book, are bad but have a certain amount of documentary interest.

SELECTED NOTICES

Escape With Me! by Osbert Sitwell. Macmillan 12/6 net.

In a characteristic passage, Mr. Osbert Sitwell announces the discovery that the vast revenues which enabled the ancient kings of Cambodia to build such edifices as Angkor Thom and Angkor Vat, together with a hundred other temples still wholly or partly submerged in the forest, were derived from the collection and sale of kingfisher wings, once exported to make head-dresses for Chinese brides.

Accurate or no, the theory is an agreeable one. Archæologists can tell us comparatively little of Angkor, and have as yet explained neither how it rose nor how it fell. In attempting to assign its chief buildings to their correct chronological order, they skip wildly back and forth across the centuries, and having agreed, probably enough, that the geometrical formalism of Angkor Vat must post-date the romantic irregularity of Angkor Thom, during recent years they have taken it into their heads to reverse the decision. A purely imaginative approach has many advantages; for it is on the imagination, rather than on the sense of history, that these extraordinary monuments make their first effect. Like the ramparts and palaces of Peking (and unlike almost every other "sight" Asian or European) they are even larger and more magnificent than one had considered possible. Their magnitude alone would be slightly bewildering. When combined with the oddity and beauty of their execution—vast stone causeways flanked by rearing stone cobras: towers and gates surmounted by gigantic smiling heads, speckled, pocked and scurfed with golden lichen: bridges of which the balustrades assume the form of a mythological serpent which lies in the arms of opposing ranks of gods and demons, engaged in an endless legendary tug-of-war:

phallic towers wavering and flickering through the glassy heat haze: and damp cloisters which are lined with an interminable bas-relief, depicting battle scenes from the *Ramayana*, and which stink horribly with the excrement of a million bats, hanging in thick leathery bunches from every crevice—the impression produced is so acute as to be rather uncomfortable; fear, disgust and admiration are all combined.

Mr. Sitwell's account of Angkor—particularly of the Bayou, that nightmare temple which resolves itself, as you draw close, into a pyramid of smiling sculptured heads—is as vivid a description of the site as has yet been written.

Angkor occupies half—and, on the whole, the more interesting half—of Mr. Sitwell's book. But the section devoted to Peking is well worth reading (if somewhat more anecdotal and less concentrated) for so sensitive an observer could not fail to be interested by the variety of Chinese life, the cheerful engaging cynicism of the Chinese temperament, and the dignity of the great city's ramparts and gate-houses, whether you see them during the months of spring and winter, in a biscuit-brown landscape beneath the pure icy blue of a northern sky, or emerging from the luxuriant green of the rainy season. Mr. Sitwell is never dull or journalistic; and his title is the most misleading thing about his book. No good traveller is, in fact, an escapist. He travels with himself, and to meet himself, wherever he goes.

PETER QUENNELL.

The Scrapbook of Katharine Mansfield. Edited by J. Middleton Murry. Constable 7/6 net.

Perhaps the writings of Katharine Mansfield have been overrated; it is just at a moment when saturation point for her particular quality—sensitivity—has been reached, that there is a danger of doing her the opposite injustice. In 1917 Katharine Mansfield wrote on the fly-leaf of Tchekov's short stories

'By all the laws of M and P
This book is bound to belong to me.
Besides, I'm sure that you'll agree
I am the English Anton T.'

Three years later, she appended 'God forgive me, Tchegov, for my impertinence'. For whatever changes had taken place in her estimate of herself, Tchegov stood as high as ever, and almost her last entries are quotations from his letters.

She would have liked to be an 'English Tchegov'. That is, something less than Tchegov, because an original has always at least that advantage over a repetition. What she had in common with Anton T. was her precision of observation. She lacked his gift for inventing characters—the basis of action. Katharine Mansfield's characters are all the same, the passive 'she' (it is usually 'she', seldom a man) who is the infinitely receptive plate on which the impression of the moment is photographed, a moment that has no past, and no future, does not commit, and does not hold any possibility of development. 'It was wonderful how quickly Rose Eagle forgot the first fourteen years of her life. They were nothing but a dream, out of which she wakened to find herself sitting on her yellow tin box in the kitchen of her 'first place' . . . She and the yellow tin box might have been washed through the back door into Mrs. Taylor's kitchen on the last wave of a sea-storm.'

The Scrapbook, that contains odds and ends, diary, unfinished stories, odd sentences, does not lack any essential quality that is to be found in her complete works. Sensibility in its purest form is to be found on every page. One has the impression of being machine-gunned with 'moments', and perhaps so did the author herself, until she could physically endure no more, and died too young. Yet had she lived twice as long, it is unlikely that she could have made the mesh of her style finer, for capturing those fleeting impressions. Yet an impression is a good servant, but a bad master. ' . . . a large tabby with a thin tail and a round flat face like a penny bun. Now, folding its paws, it squatted down exactly opposite the parlour window, and it was

impossible not to believe that its bold gaze was directed expressly at him. It knew how he hated it. Much it cared. It had come into his world without asking, it would stay as long as it chose and go again when the fancy seized it.' Like a cat, pleasant or otherwise, the impression will come, and as surely go. 'There are seconds—they come five or six at a time—when you suddenly feel the presence of the eternal harmony perfectly attained. In those five seconds I live through a lifetime.' But again "What has happened to your blissful happiness of half an hour ago?"

Katharine Mansfield's structural weakness becomes apparent in the ease with which, when 'moments' no longer sustained her, she fell victim to the philosophic vagueness of 'Cosmic Anatomy'. Her mind was uncritical. She passed from one certainty to another as each moment brought or took away its own conviction. "I wonder" she thought, dreamy and grave, looking up at the stars, "I wonder if there really is a God?" But she did not want intellectual conviction either way.

Katharine Mansfield finds her counterpart in the small suburban villas that were being built at the time she was writing. Free from any sense of cultural or social tradition, she never put her finger on the spot at which experiences that have no long-term sources or implications become inadequate. But had she done so, her writing might have become less clearly focussed, and less perfect of its kind.

K. J. RAINE.

A Regency Chapter: Lady Bessborough and her friendships by Ethel Colburn Mayne. Macmillan 16/-.

Caroline of England by Peter Quennell. Collins 12/6.

From Mr. Quennell's frontispiece the portly dignity of the consort of George II confronts us, from Miss Mayne's the feline charm of Lady Bessborough. Queen Caroline's picture is the unilluminating stock representation of royalty, and it is Mr. Quennell's writing which gives humanity to this high-bosomed dummy in brocade. But Lady Bessborough was painted by Reynolds, and the whole of

Miss Mayne's book seems no more than a foot-note to the picture. It is, however, a witty, rambling, altogether good-humoured foot-note, written by a practised raconteuse round a good subject. Lady Bessborough, sister of the Duchess of Devonshire, mother of that "wild, delicate, odd, delightful person" Lady Caroline Lamb, object of Sheridan's embarrassing devotion and of Granville's long attachment, makes an effective centre-piece for a varied canvas. Here the ungainly Regent blubbers at a lady's feet, here Sheridan makes a public scene, Lady Bessborough defends herself with a tea-spoon against an exuberant admirer, or intervenes in the tragic escapades of her impossible daughter. If Miss Mayne's style is sometimes regrettably arch, her book is none the less entertaining, and should give an afternoon's pleasant entertainment to all those who think with some nostalgic regret of the irresponsible, amoral, yet strangely civilised world of Regency society, and of a period in which it was possible for an English Prime Minister to adjourn the House of Commons for the first night of *Hamlet*.

In Lady Bessborough's life, Lord Bessborough was of singularly little account. Queen Caroline's life centred on George II, and indeed her career resolves itself into the history of her ascendancy over this conceited and selfish little man. She and Walpole ruled, while "dapper George" boasted triumphantly to the world that other Kings might be ciphers, but he was not. As Mr. Quennell reveals, in a study of unusual penetration, the apparently submissive German *Hausfrau*, Caroline, was in fact a woman so much in love with power that she was willing even to pay the price of self-effacement to obtain it. While he does not underestimate the physical and mental sufferings to which her husband's vanity and caprice subjected her, he feels that she gained an adequate reward. She certainly wielded a power unique in English history.

On its merits as a biography alone, Mr. Quennell's book would take a very high place among recent historical writings. But he has done far more than merely write the

life of Queen Caroline. He has drawn with a scholar's judgment and the quick sardonic observation which so rarely goes with scholarship, a graphic picture of the whole Augustan Age. To single out the sketches of Pope, of Hervey, or of Walpole for especial praise would be to do less than justice to the perfect symmetry of the whole. Structurally the book is a masterpiece, as finely proportioned as the houses of the period. To wish that it were longer would be to place the mere prolongation of pleasure before its quality. The elegant economy of the work is among its chief beauties; not a sentence is wasted, not a line but plays its neat, essential part.

Behind the Battle by T. C. Worsley. Robert Hale, 10/6. *The Spanish Tragedy* by Jef Last. Translated from the Dutch by David Hallett. Routledge, 7/6. Plenty of people have written up the Spanish calamity; has anyone written the Spanish tragedy? Neither of these two authors has; Last is a partisan, Worsley a commentator. Last, a Dutch *deraciné* who has been through the conventional catalogue of the twentieth century wanderer—journalist, miner, interpreter, teacher etc.—arrived in Spain to fight as a captain for the Government. *The Spanish Tragedy* (but what cheek to use that word!) consists of letters home scribbled by him in front-line trenches, battle-descriptions, political chronicles and polemics, sketches of Madrid under siege, portraits of anti-Fascist writers; a jumblesale of jottings. Beneath the surface of Last's secondhand, journalistic prose are conveyed several things of magnitude; the book is better than its writing. One remembers Bergamin, the humble and brilliant Catholic revolutionary for whom Communist "historical materialism" is "the Word made flesh"; and Last's peasant troops, who harvested a field of beans in No Man's Land under enemy fire because "the harvest is sacred", even during war; and the liberal courage of Last himself who, though fighting and writing passionately in the cause, is himself dispassionate, more interested in mankind's happiness and health than in calling his next-door neighbour

a Trotskyist. In retrospect an exciting book, of much impact sincere all through, full of information. Future historians of the Spanish war will find it useful.

Worsley's book is talked rather than written, and talked very well; neat, graphic, urbane, witty, sometimes moving and always in earnest. It is an excellent example of the graph now being described by more and more English intellectuals, from inaction into politics; and as such it is all the more effective because the author started out as a detached educated Liberal floating, as it were, quite irrelevantly in space, and in acquiring the mentality of a partisan retained the best features of his Liberalism, the humanity and self-criticism. He worked in Spain as a driver in an American blood-transfusion unit on the Government side and this book describes his experiences; the climax of it being a magnificent and terrifying account of the retreat from Malaga. As a whole it does not leave behind the same impression of human-historical 'punch' as Last's compilation, but it is equally important and much more readable.

Ballygally Castle Hotel, County Antrim, Northern Ireland, is the perfect refuge from war worries and blackout irritation. The Hotel has every comfort, the cooking is excellent and it is surrounded by country of great beauty. Write to the manager for the Brochure.